

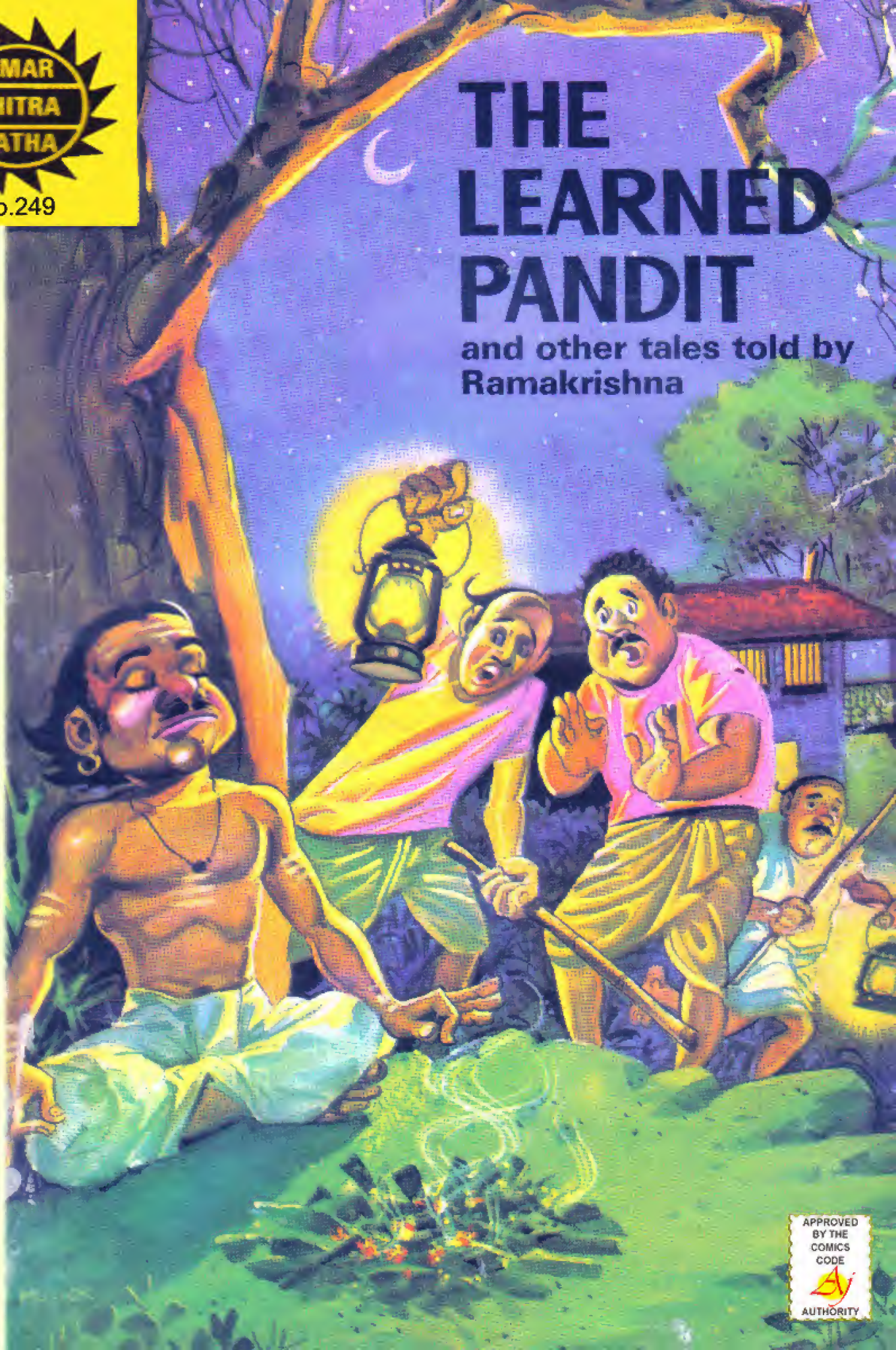


No.249

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

THE LEARNED PANDIT

and other tales told by
Ramakrishna



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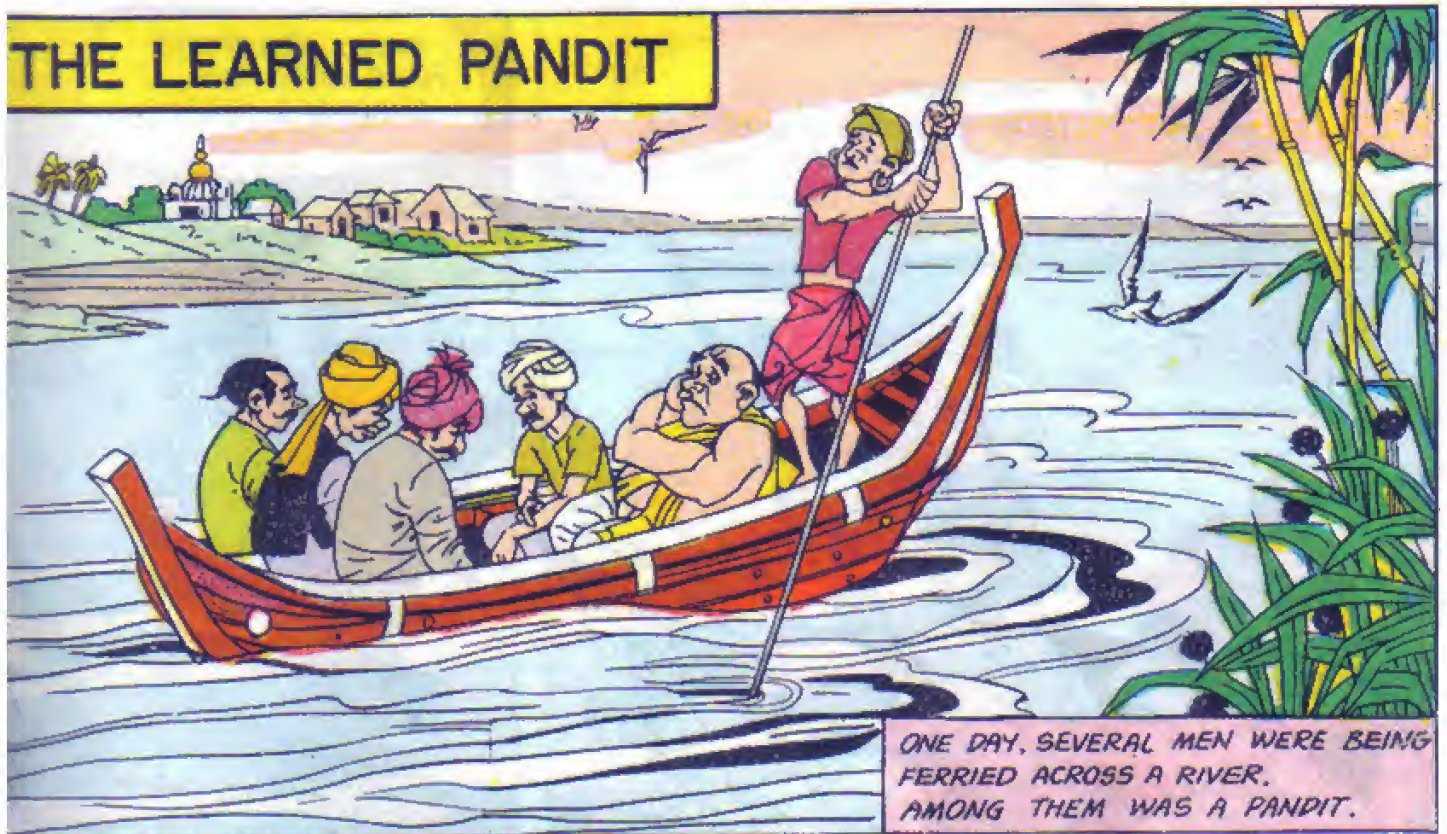
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THE LEARNED PANDIT

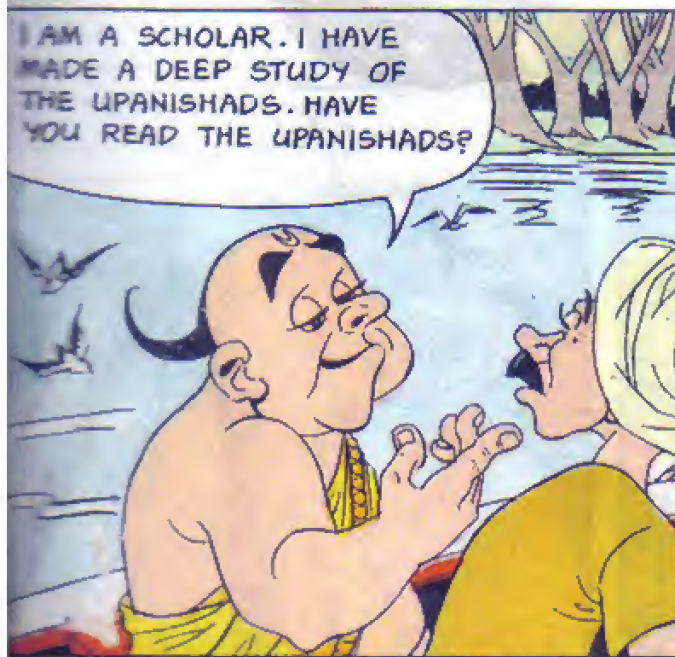


ONE DAY, SEVERAL MEN WERE BEING FERRIED ACROSS A RIVER. AMONG THEM WAS A PANDIT.

I'LL TALK TO ONE OF THESE FELLOWS. NOT THAT IT WILL BENEFIT ME IN ANY WAY BUT IT WILL AT LEAST HELP ME PASS THE TIME.



I AM A SCHOLAR. I HAVE MADE A DEEP STUDY OF THE UPANISHADS. HAVE YOU READ THE UPANISHADS?

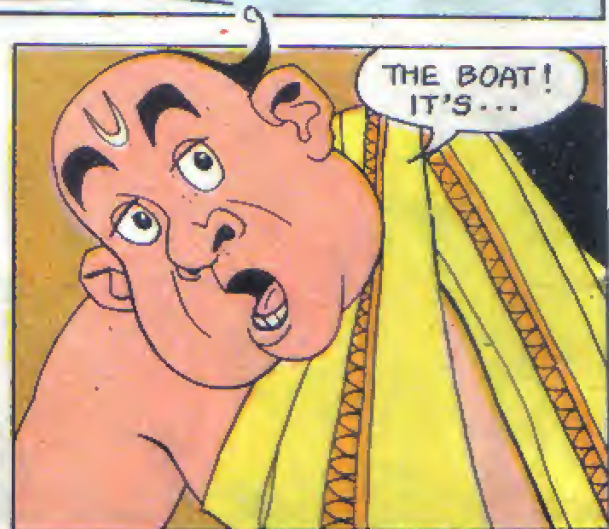
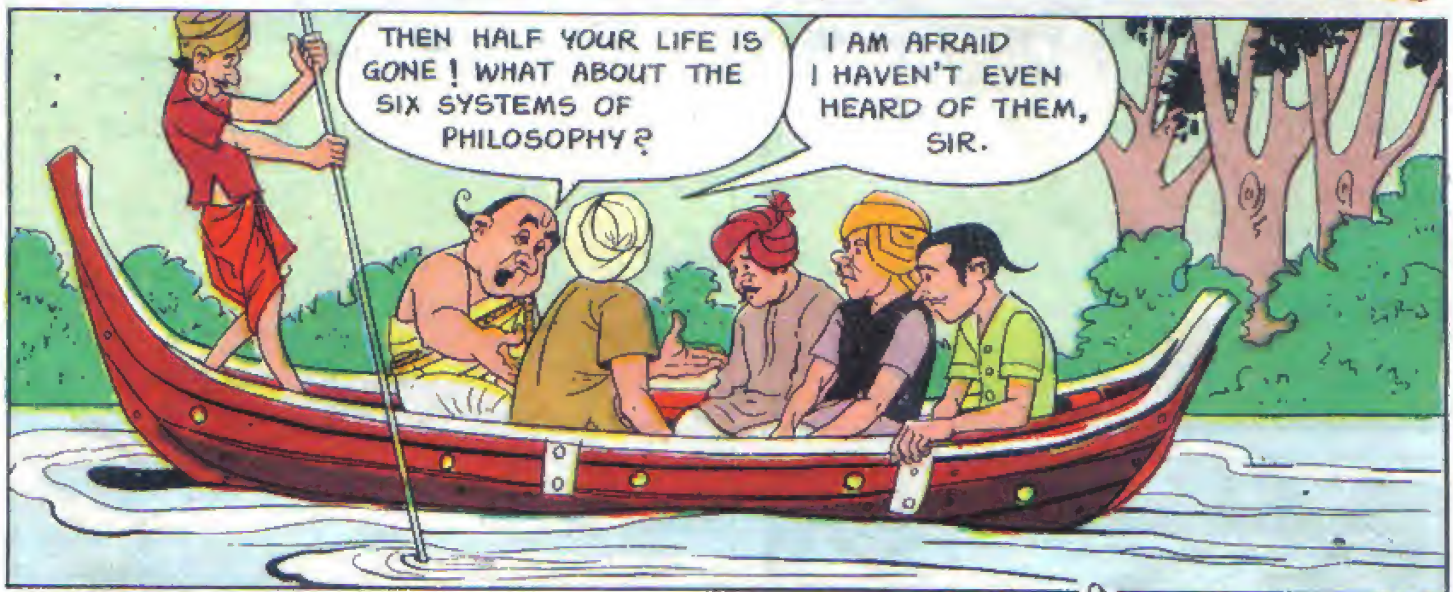
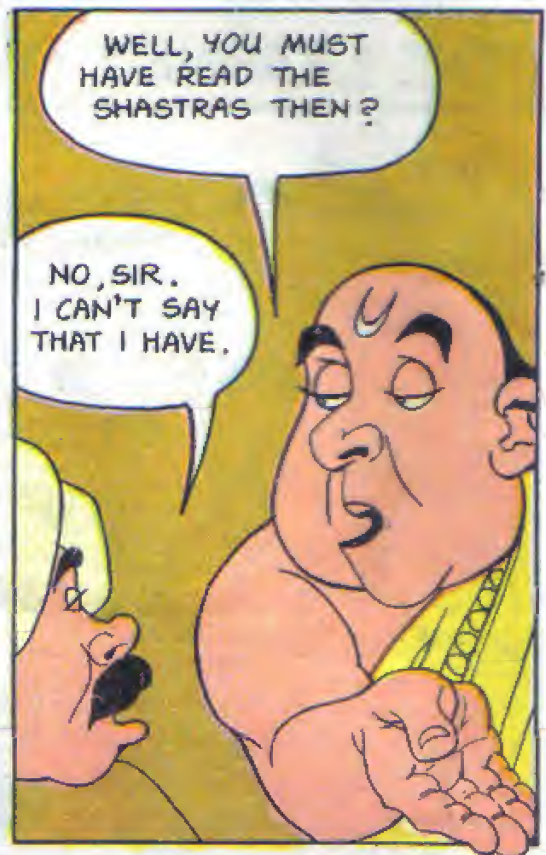
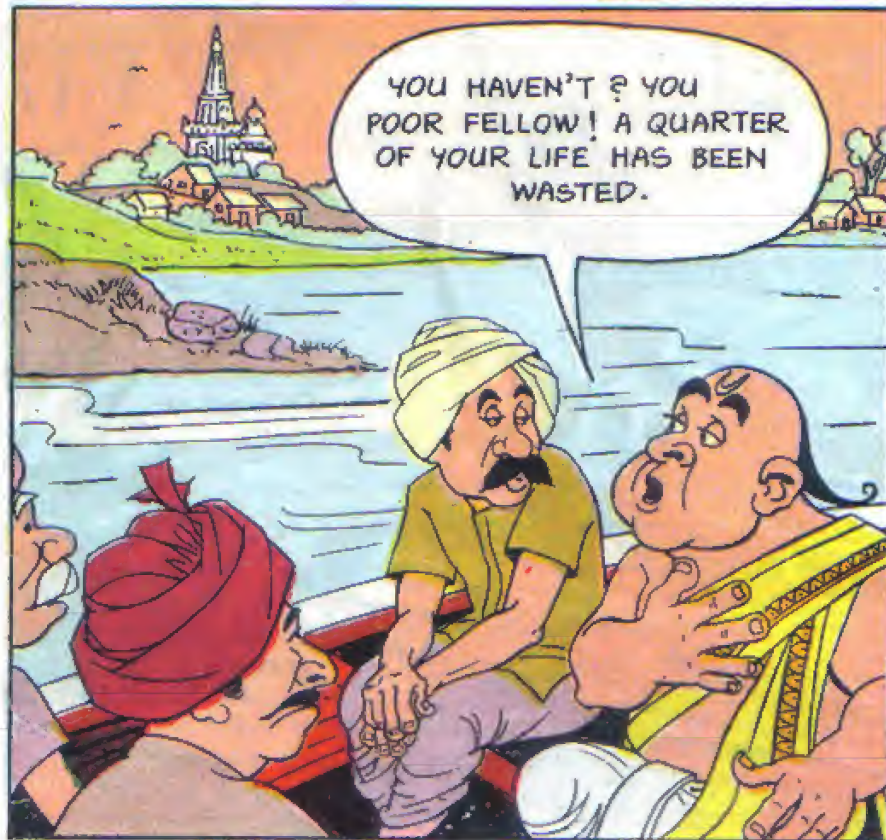


NO, SIR, I HAVEN'T.

I AM A FARMER, GOOD SIR, FROM A VILLAGE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER.

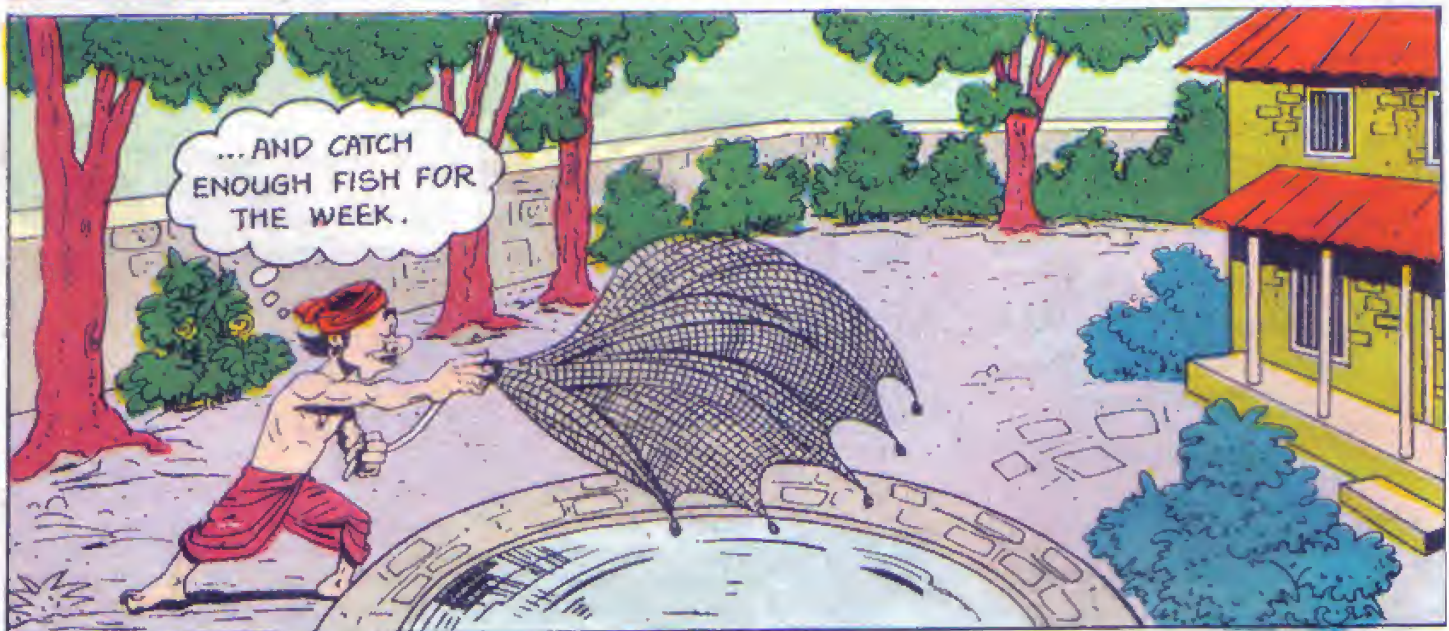
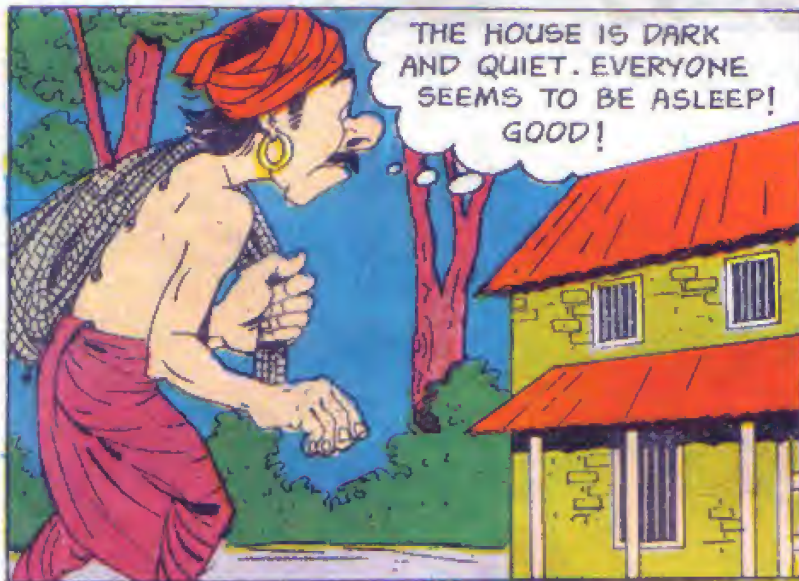
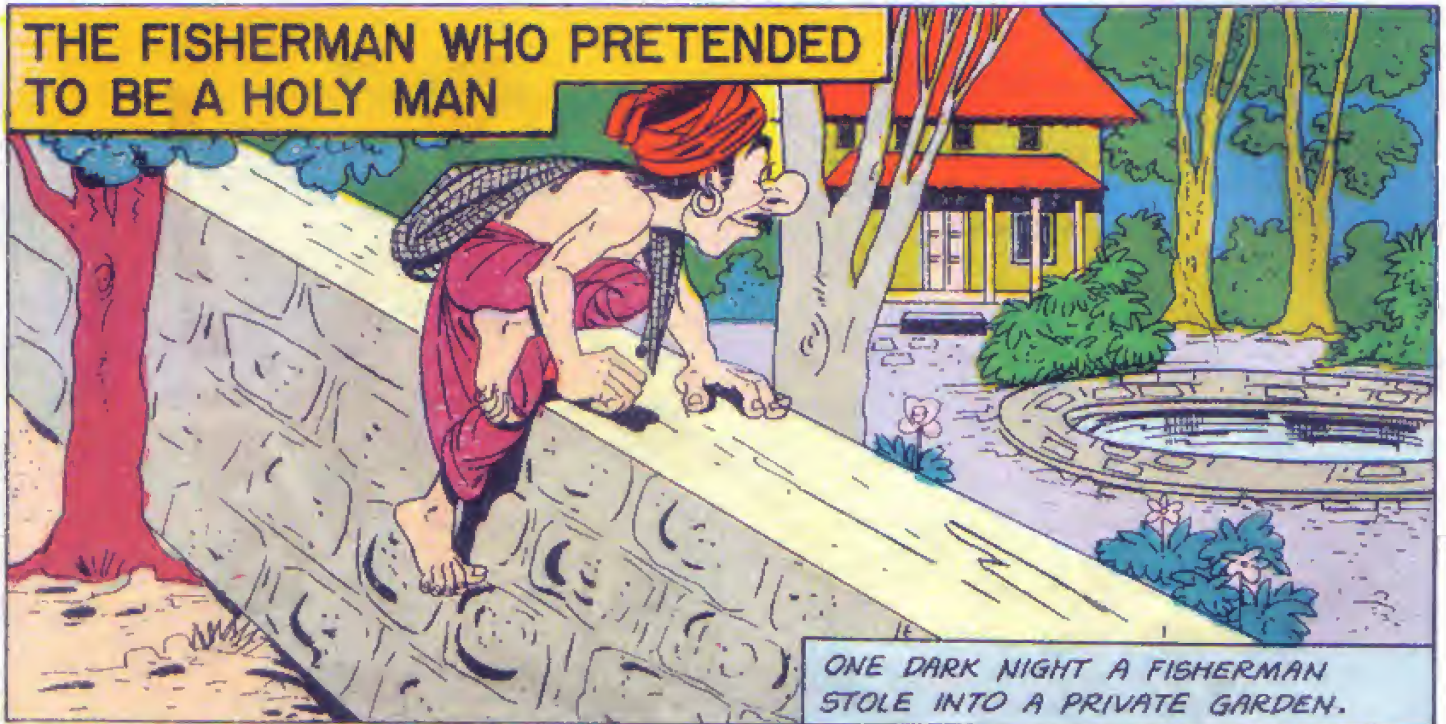


WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?





THE FISHERMAN WHO PRETENDED TO BE A HOLY MAN



BUT EVEN AS THE NET WAS CAST —

WHAT WAS THAT SOUND? DID YOU HEAR IT?

I DID. IT SOUNDED LIKE A NET FALLING INTO THE WATER.

A NET? IN THE WATER? THE POND! MY FISH! SOMEBODY'S STEALING MY FISH! THIEF! THIEF!

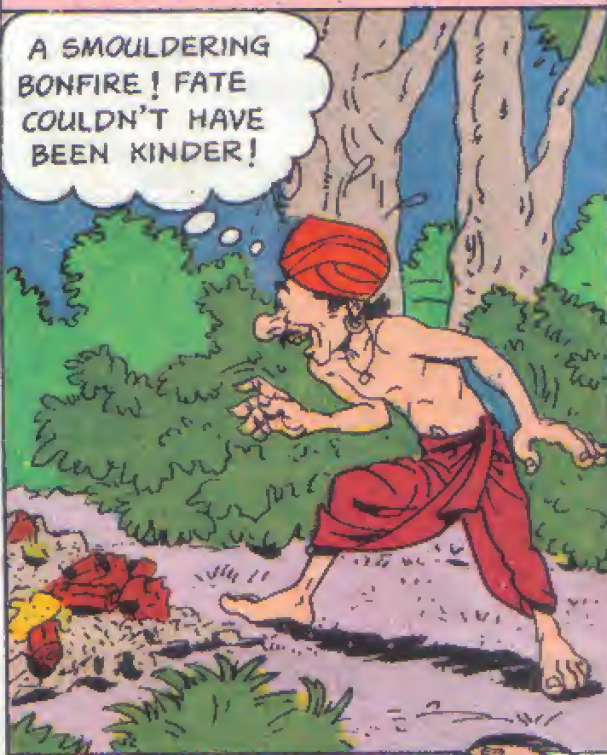
THE OWNER WOKE UP HIS SERVANTS.

QUICK! IT'S A THIEF! CATCH HIM!

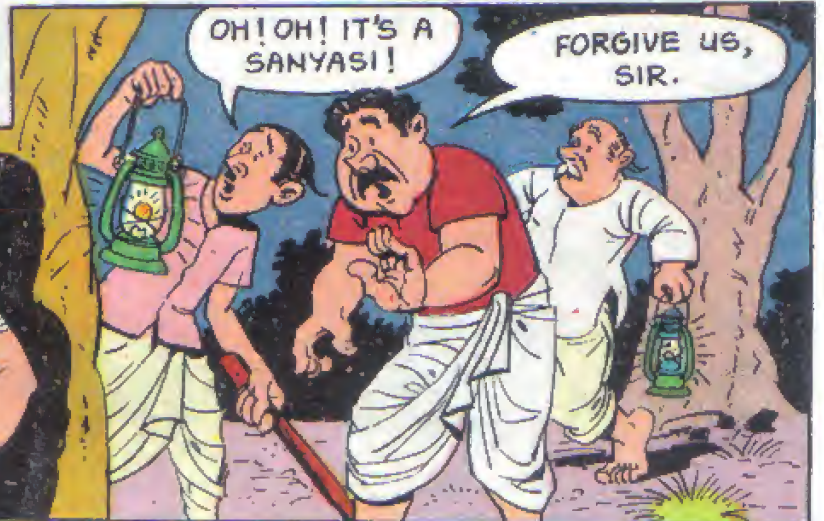
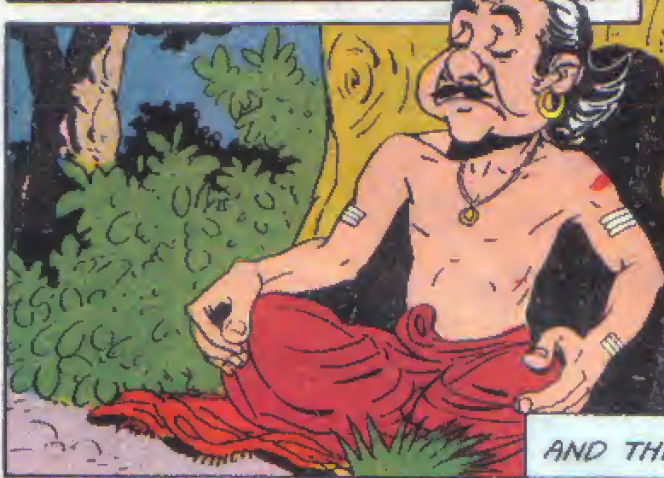
OUTSIDE THE HOUSE —

THEY'RE AWAKE! THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY. I'M TRAPPED. WHAT SHALL I DO?

AS HE LOOKED DESPERATELY ABOUT,
SOMETHING CAUGHT HIS EYE.



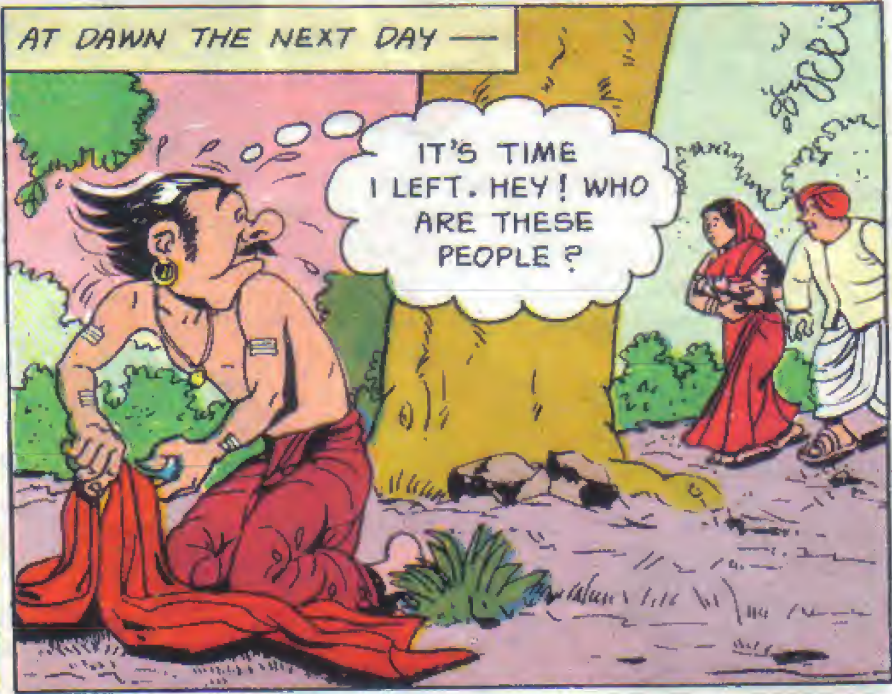
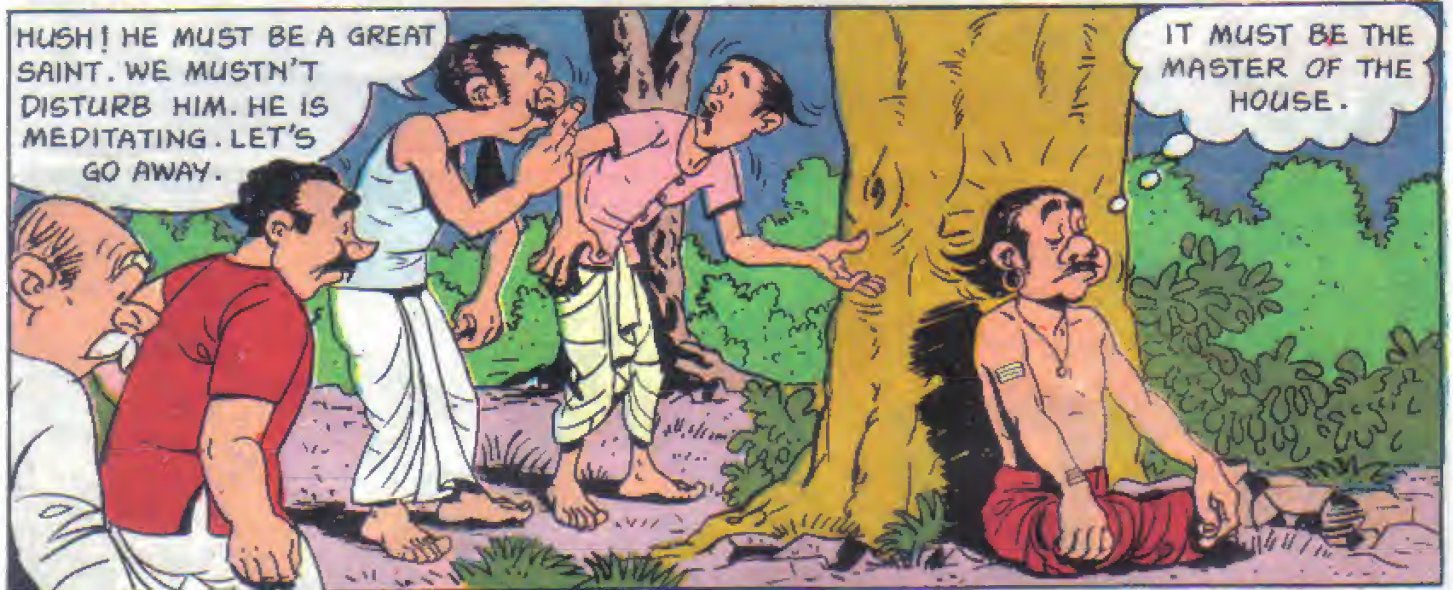
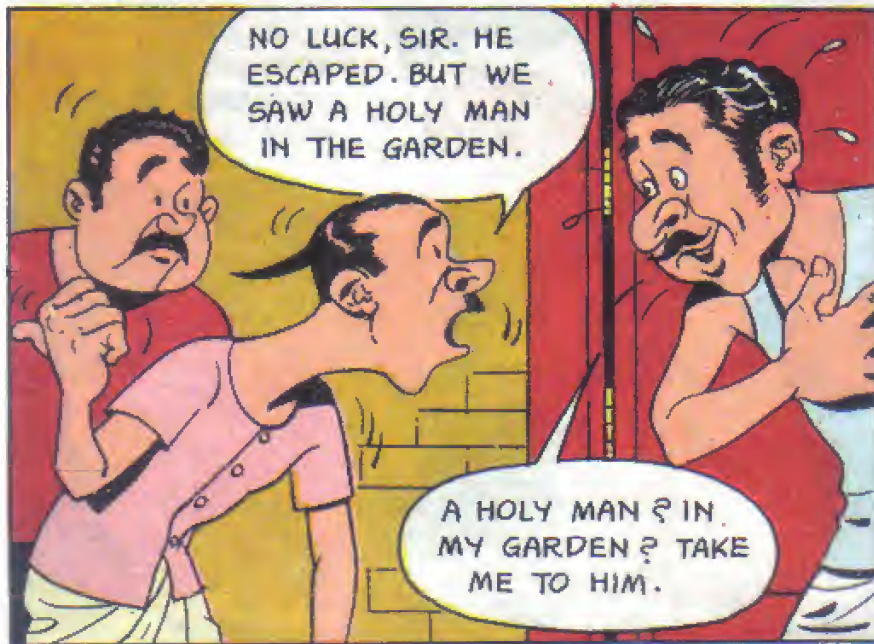
HE PULLED OFF HIS TURBAN AND SMEARED SOME
ASH ON HIS ARMS AND FOREHEAD.

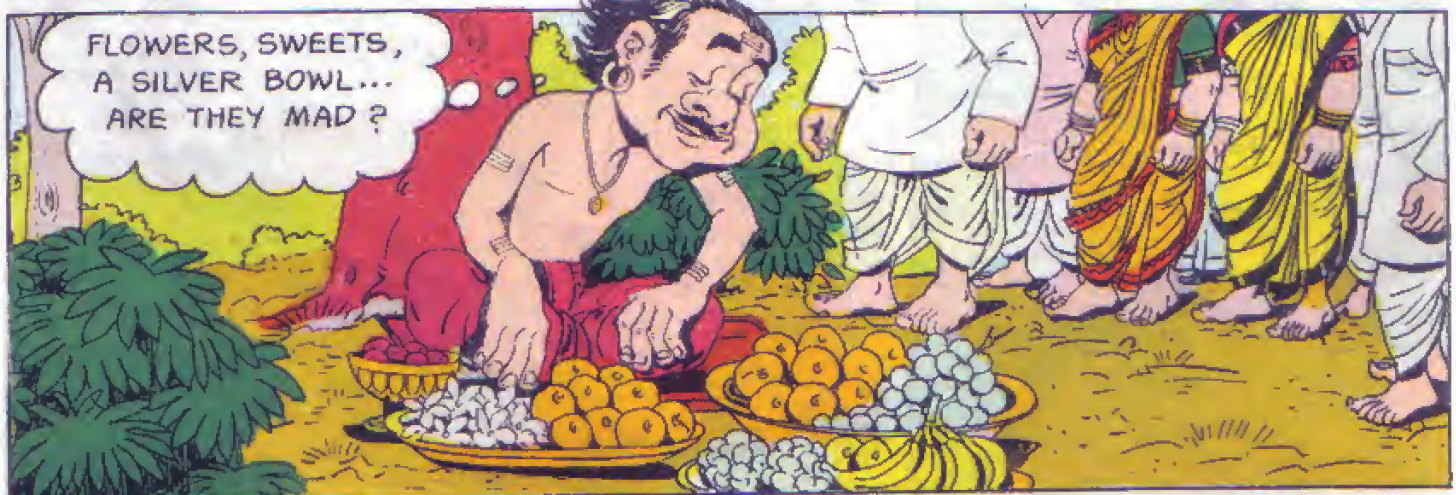
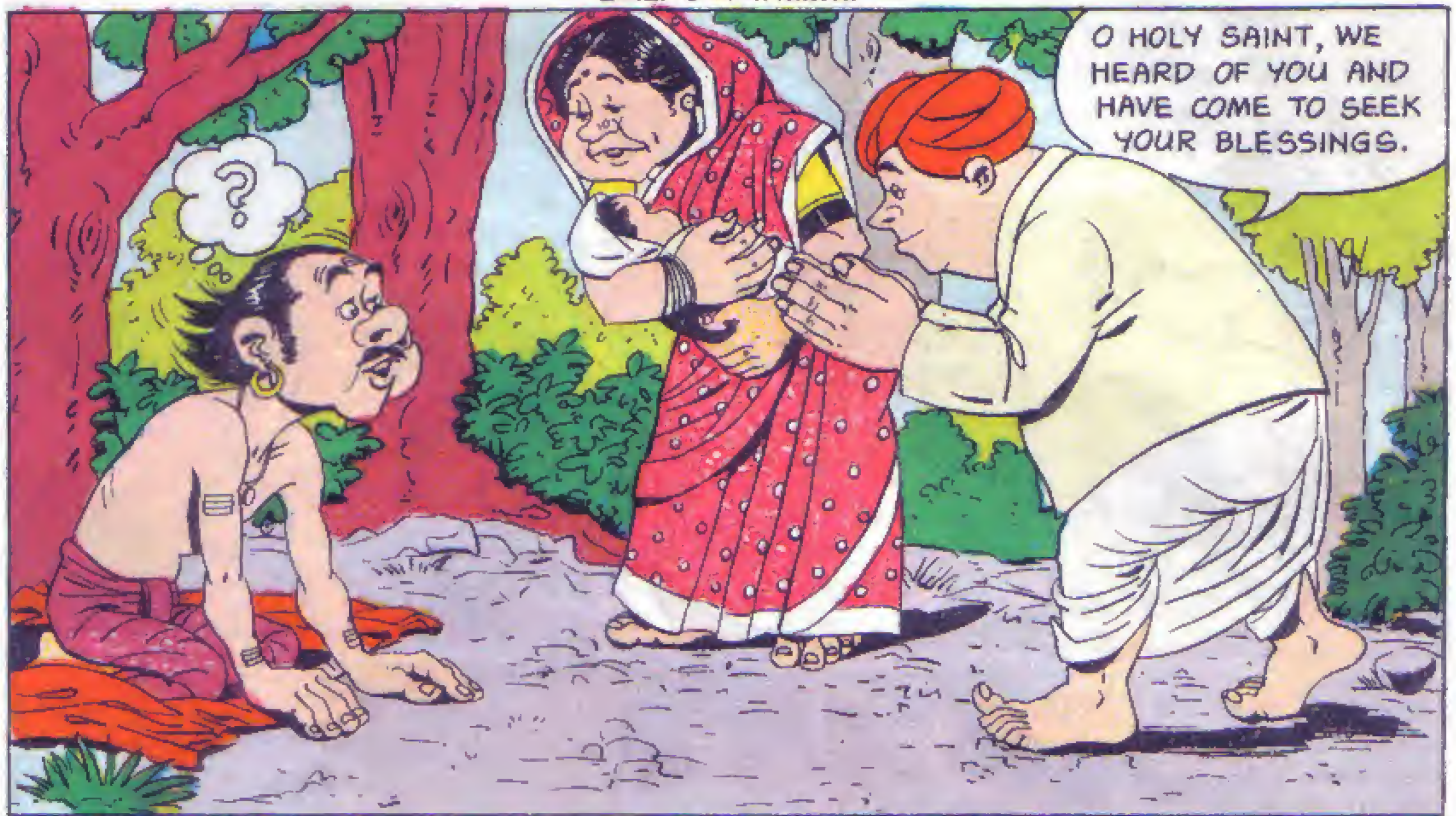


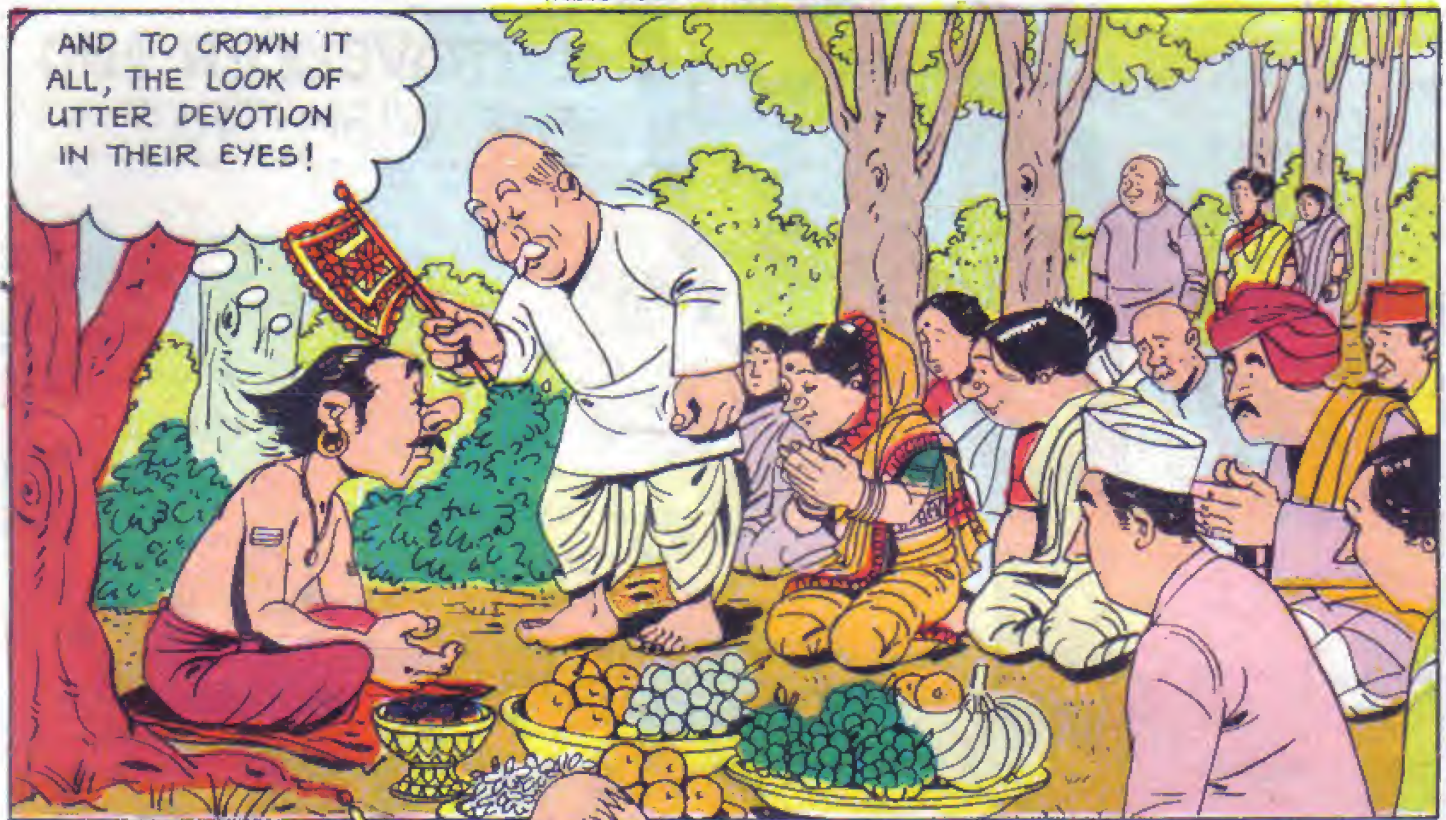
AND THE SERVANTS CONTINUED THEIR SEARCH.

AFTER A WHILE, THEY CAME BACK TO THEIR MASTER.

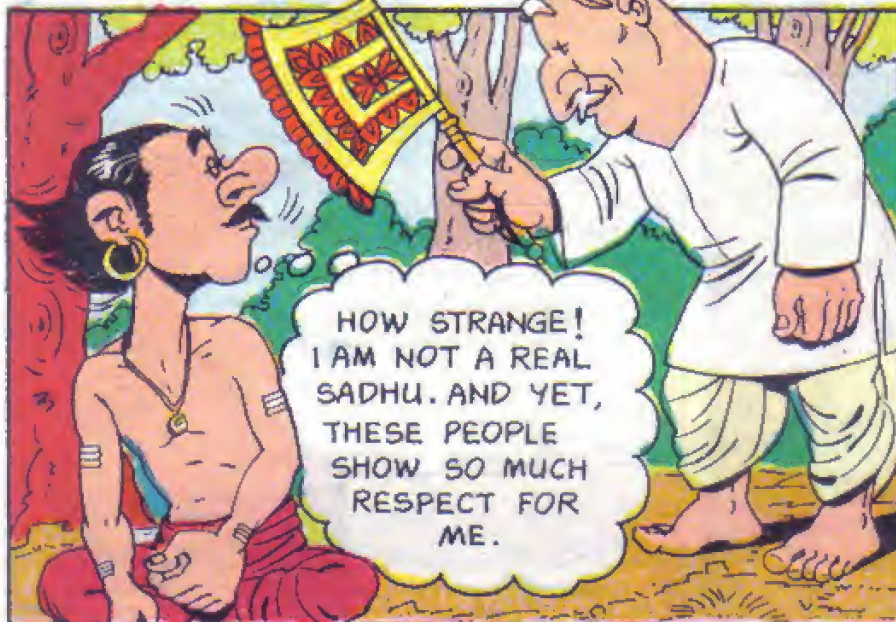




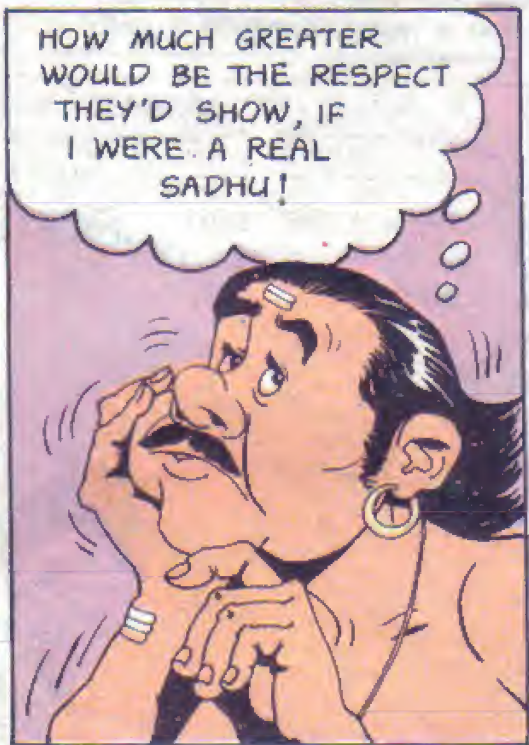




AND TO CROWN IT ALL, THE LOOK OF UTTER DEVOTION IN THEIR EYES!



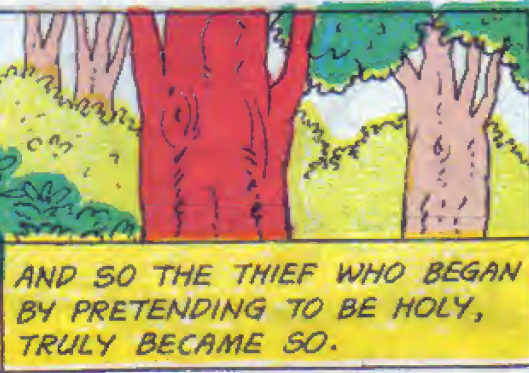
HOW STRANGE! I AM NOT A REAL SADHU. AND YET, THESE PEOPLE SHOW SO MUCH RESPECT FOR ME.



HOW MUCH GREATER WOULD BE THE RESPECT THEY'D SHOW, IF I WERE A REAL SADHU!

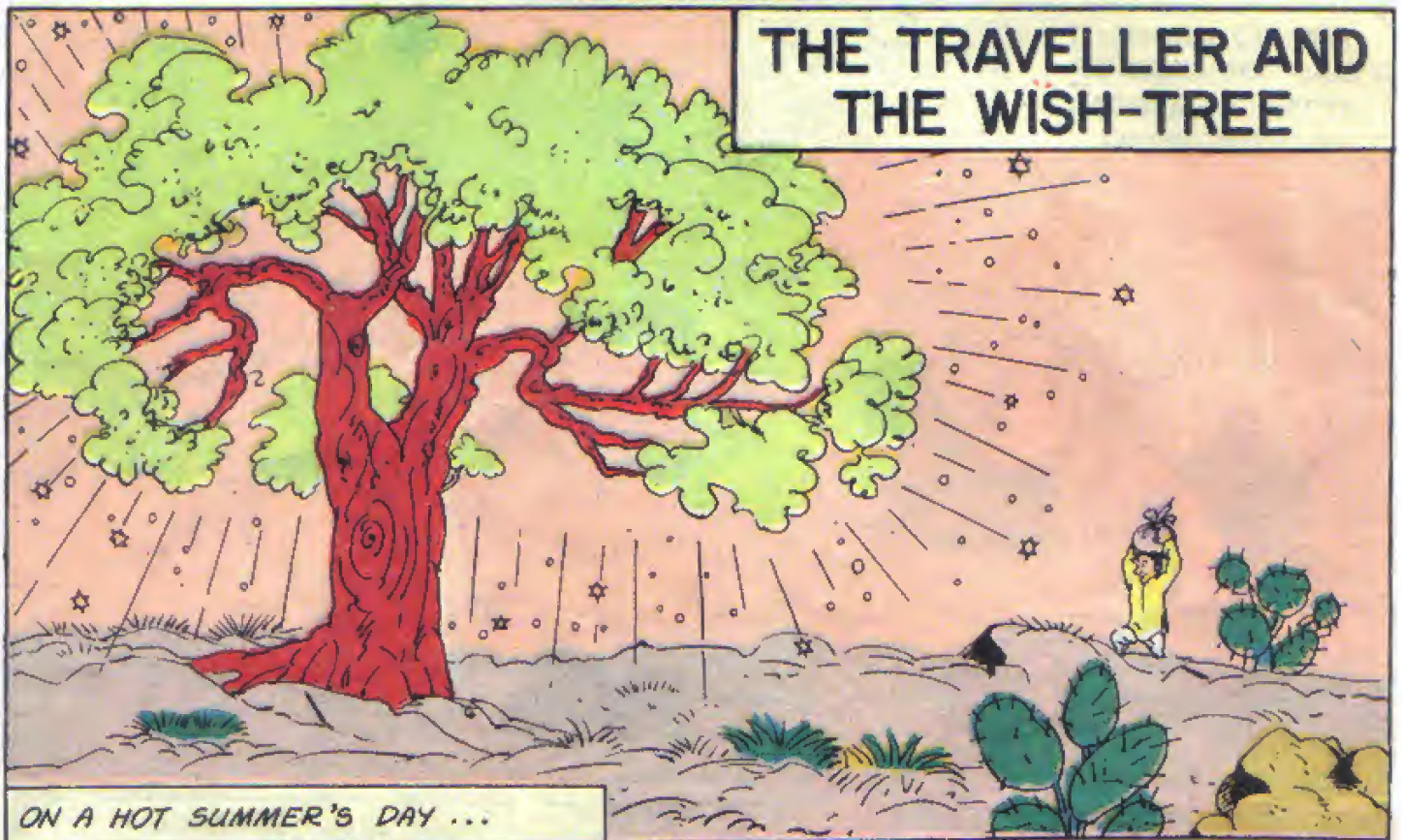


YES, I SHALL BECOME A TRUE MAN OF GOD! I SHALL GIVE UP THIEVING FOR GOOD.



AND SO THE THIEF WHO BEGAN BY PRETENDING TO BE HOLY, TRULY BECAME SO.

THE TRAVELLER AND THE WISH-TREE



ON A HOT SUMMER'S DAY ...

... A TRAVELLER STOPPED UNDER A SHADY TREE.

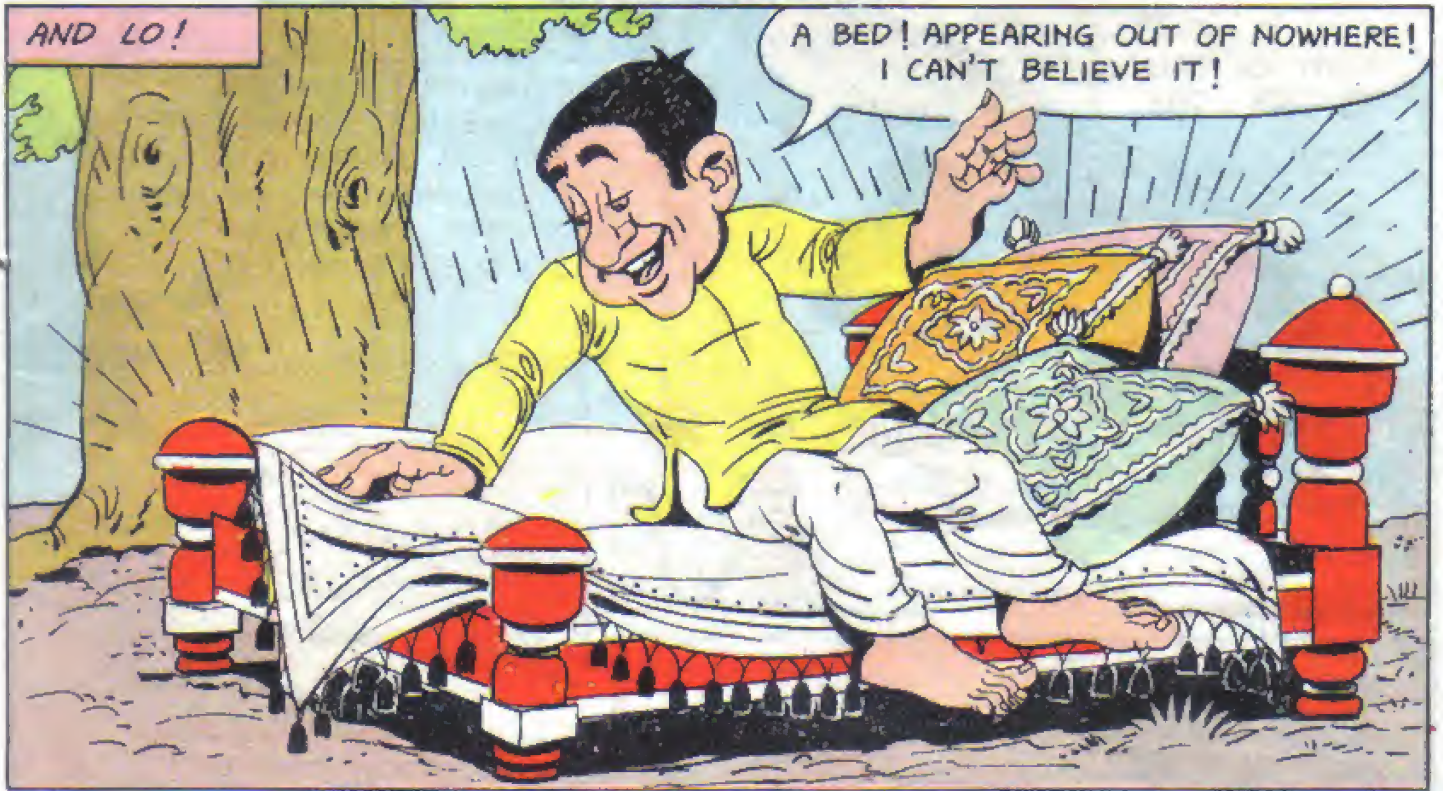
PHEW ! THE HEAT IS UNBEARABLE ! I'LL REST HERE FOR A WHILE.

LITTLE DID HE REALISE THAT THE TREE WAS A SPECIAL ONE.

AH ! THIS IS GOOD ! BUT HOW MUCH BETTER IT WOULD BE, IF I HAD A SOFT BED TO SLEEP ON.

AND LO!

A BED! APPEARING OUT OF NOWHERE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!



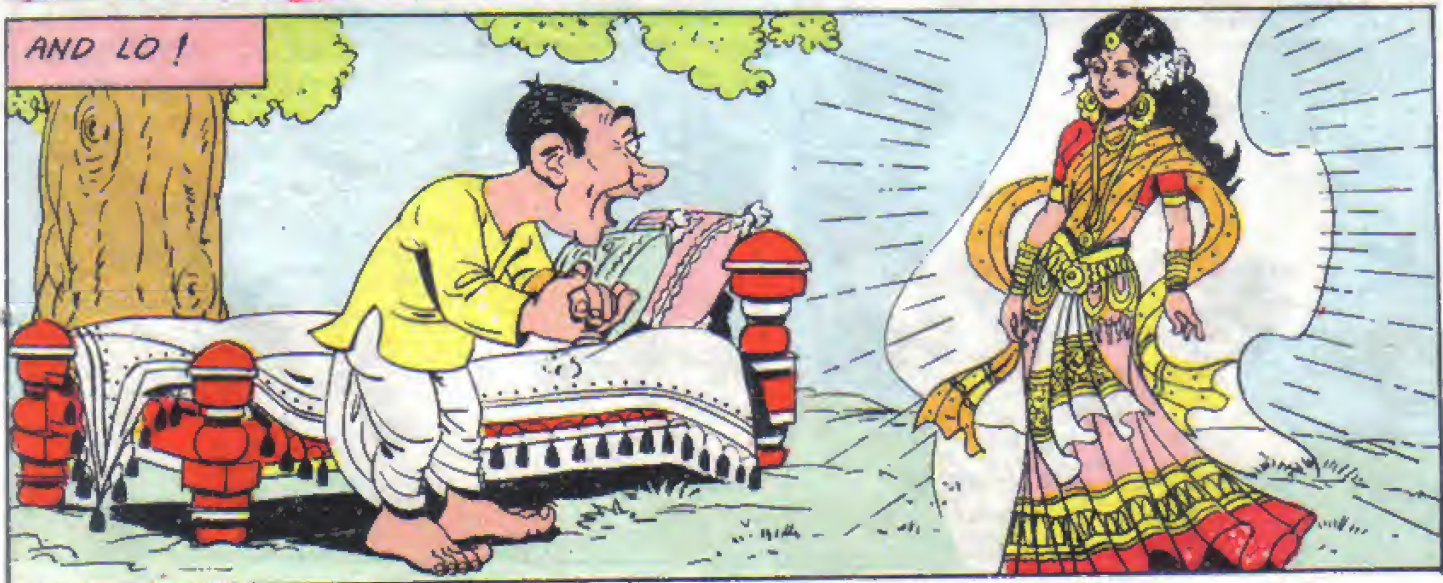
THIS IS PERFECT!
THE SHEETS ARE
WHITE AND SOFT
AS A SWAN'S
DOWN.

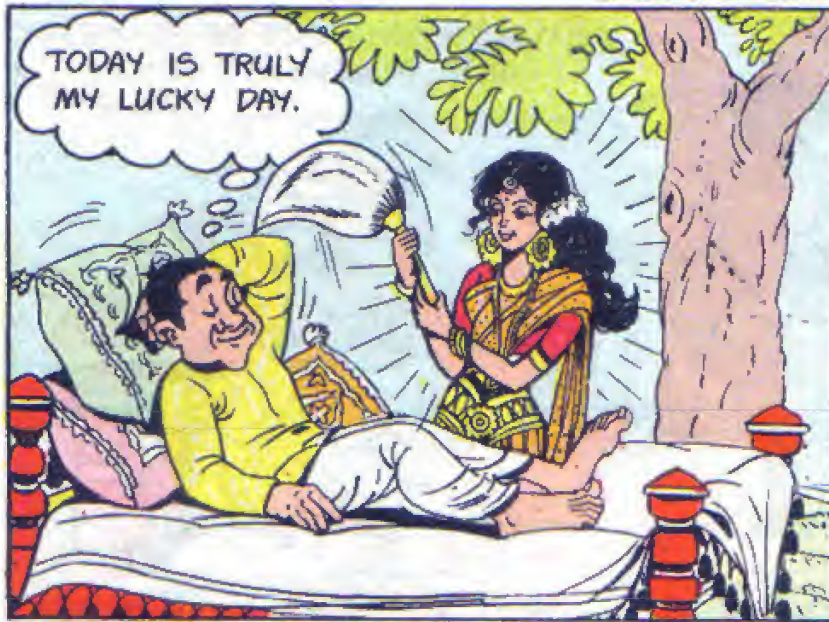


NOW ALL I NEED
IS A MAIDEN
TO KEEP ME COMPANY
IN THIS LONELY
PLACE.



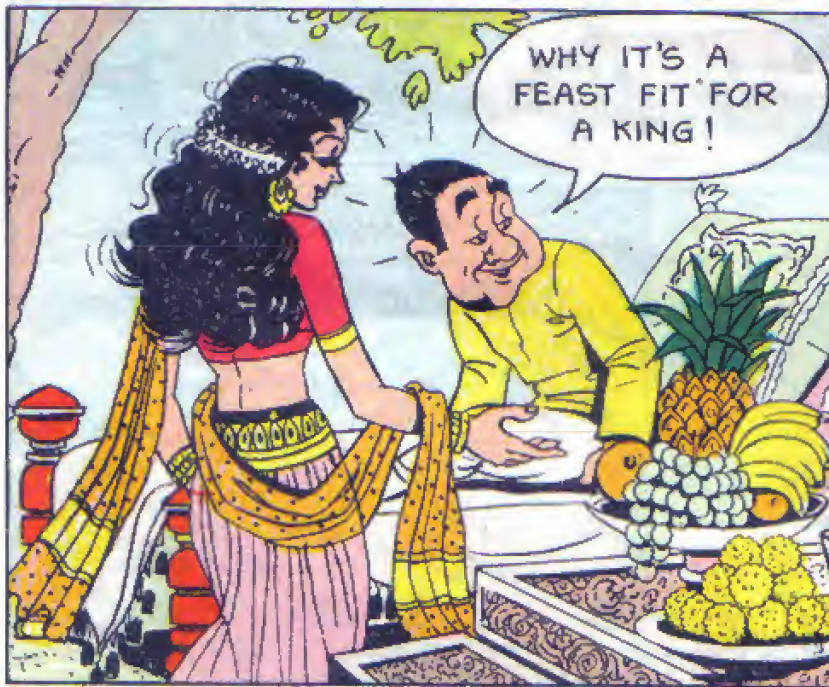
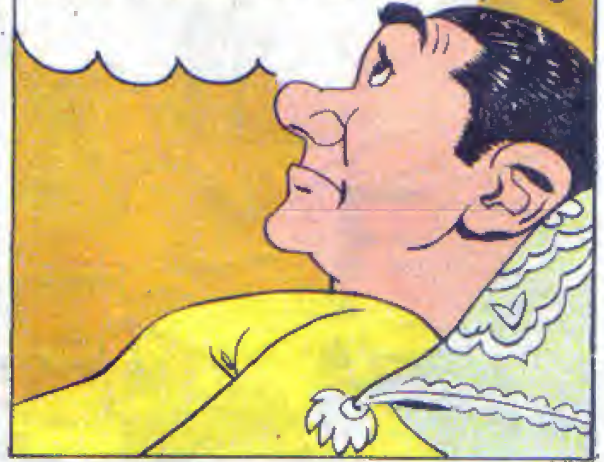
AND LO!





SOON —

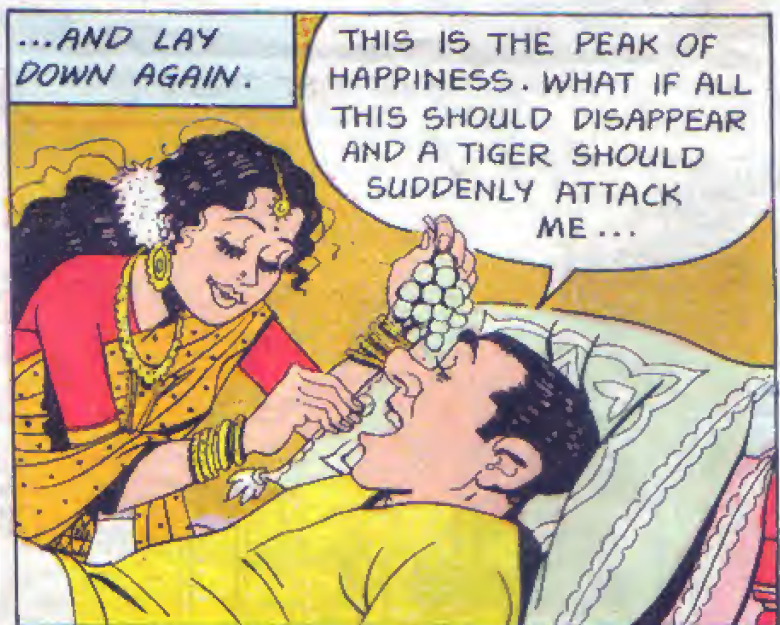
I COULDN'T HAVE HAD A LOVELIER COMPANION! BUT MY STOMACH IS GROWLING. I AM HUNGRY. IF ONLY I HAD SOME GOOD FOOD TO EAT!



WHY IT'S A FEAST FIT FOR A KING!

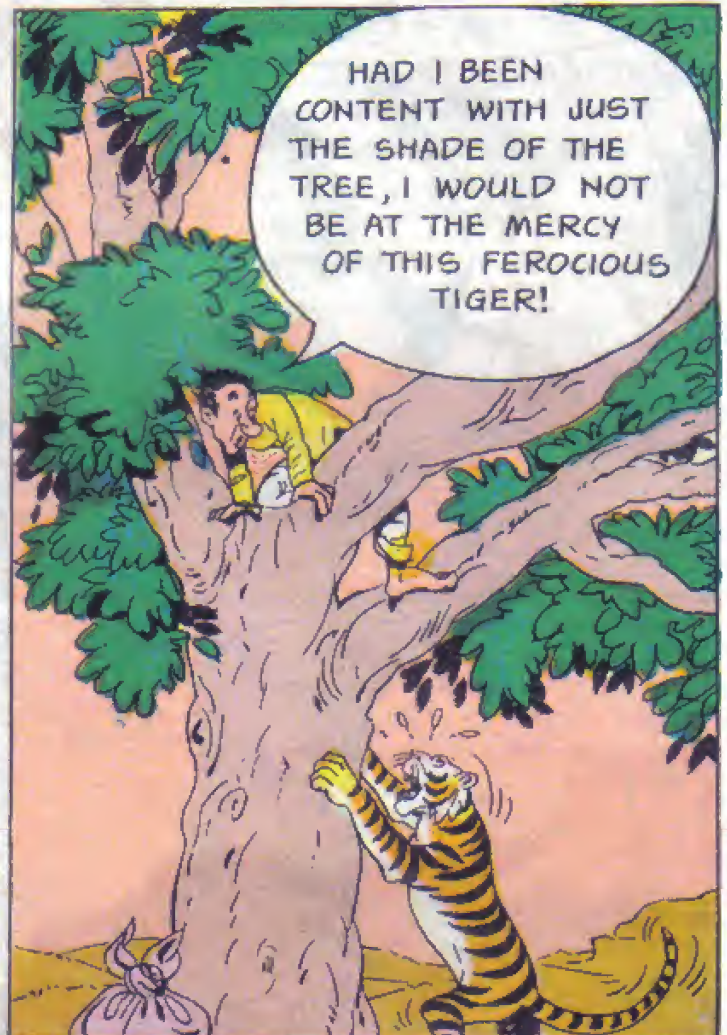


THE TRAVELLER ATE AND DRANK TILL HE WAS CONTENT...

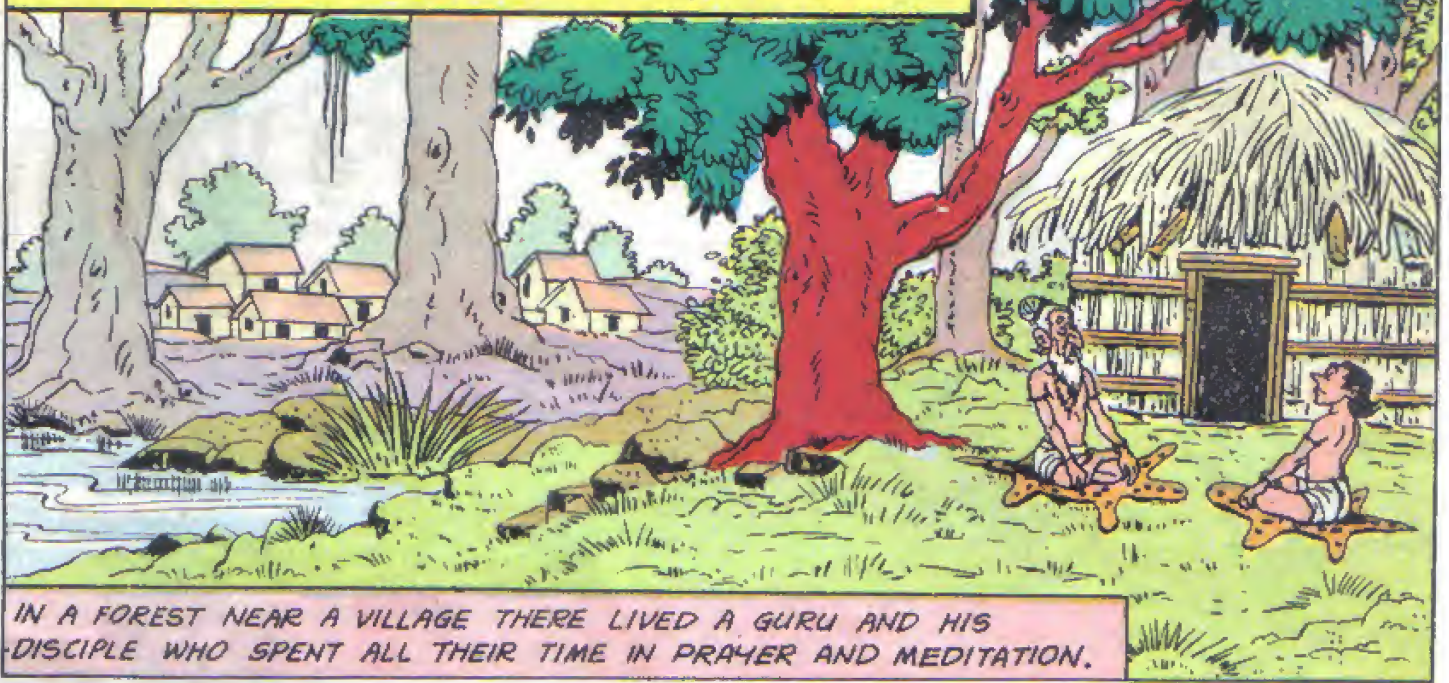


...AND LAY DOWN AGAIN.

THIS IS THE PEAK OF HAPPINESS. WHAT IF ALL THIS SHOULD DISAPPEAR AND A TIGER SHOULD SUDDENLY ATTACK ME...



THE ASCETIC AND HIS LOIN-CLOTH

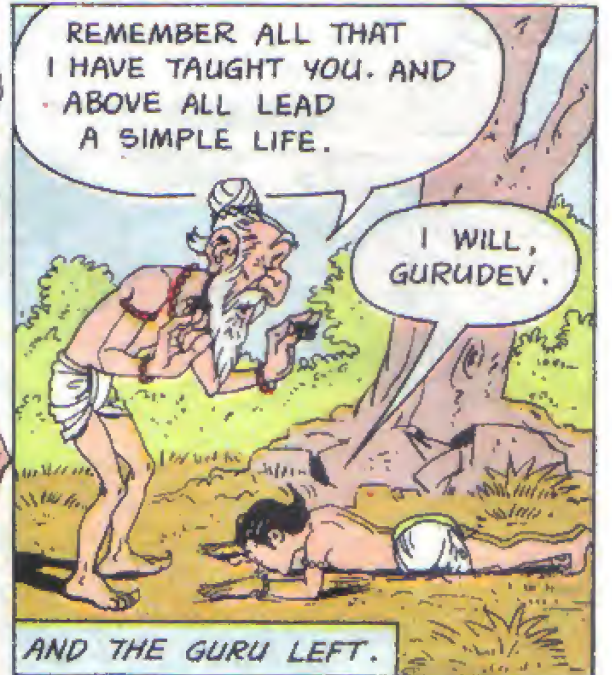


IN A FOREST NEAR A VILLAGE THERE LIVED A GURU AND HIS DISCIPLE WHO SPENT ALL THEIR TIME IN PRAYER AND MEDITATION.

THEN ONE DAY —



MY SON, I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU FOR A WHILE. I AM GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE.



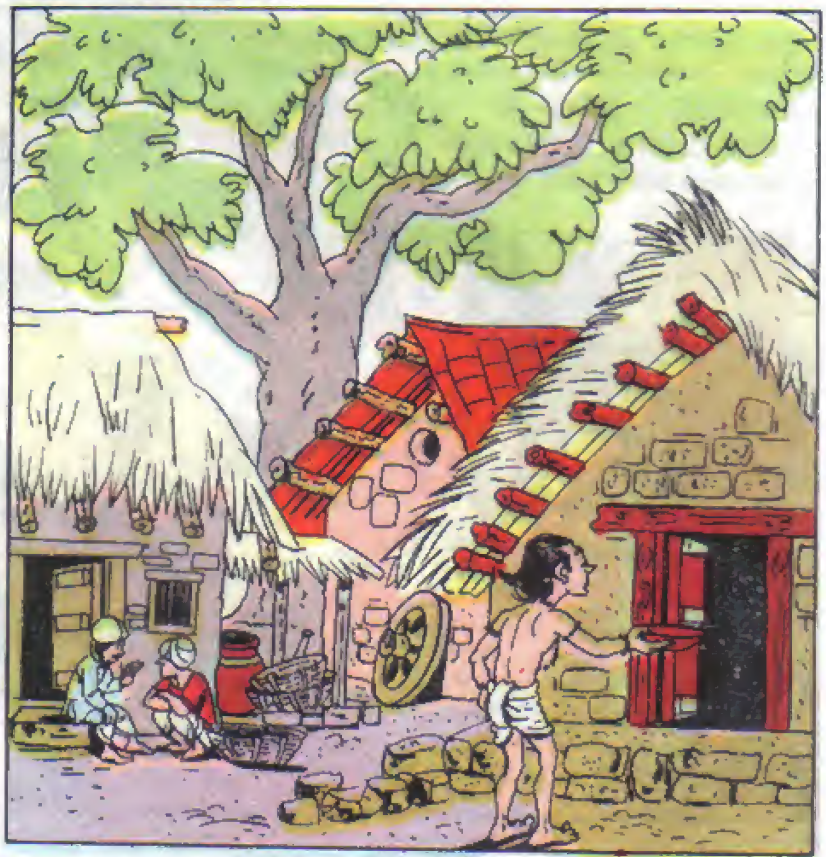
REMEMBER ALL THAT I HAVE TAUGHT YOU. AND ABOVE ALL LEAD A SIMPLE LIFE.

I WILL, GURUDEV.

AND THE GURU LEFT.

ONE MORNING, AS USUAL, THE ASCETIC WASHED HIS SPARE LOIN-CLOTH...

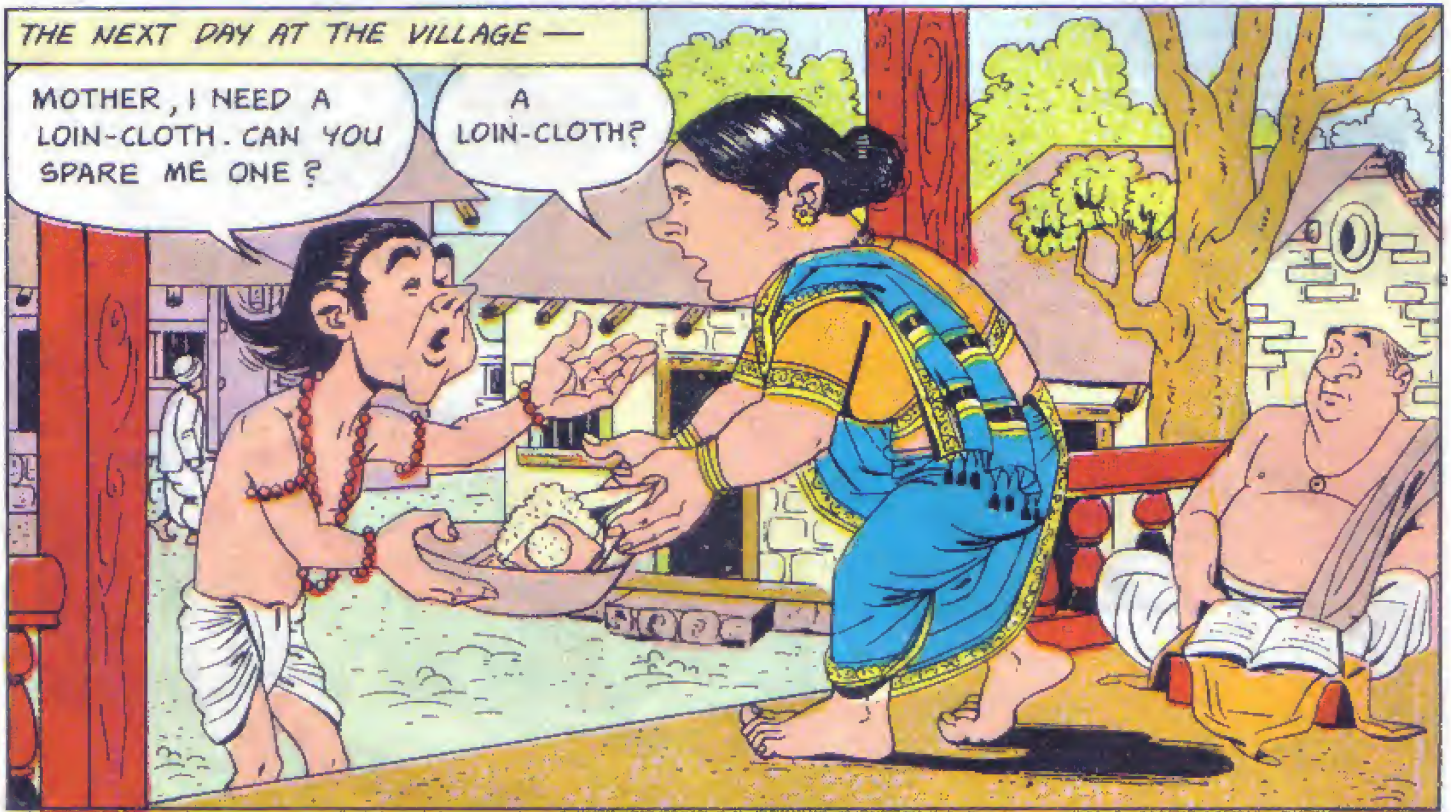




THE NEXT DAY AT THE VILLAGE —

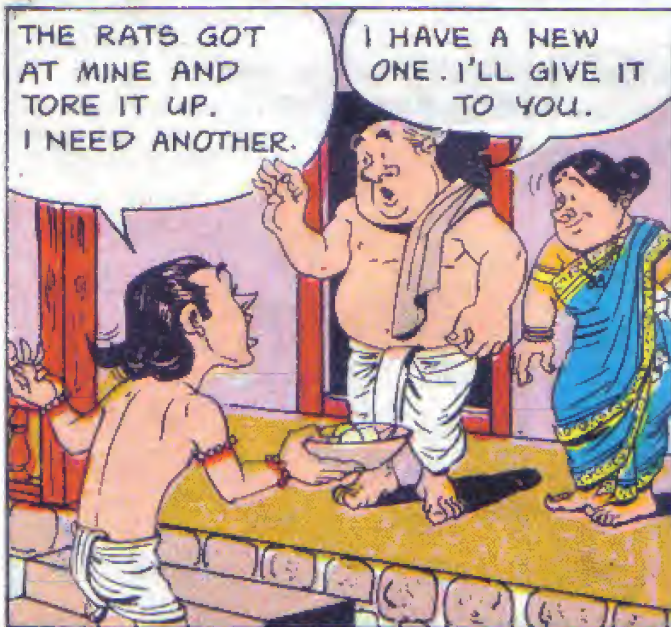
MOTHER, I NEED A LOIN-CLOTH. CAN YOU SPARE ME ONE ?

A LOIN-CLOTH?



THE RATS GOT AT MINE AND TORE IT UP. I NEED ANOTHER.

I HAVE A NEW ONE. I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU.



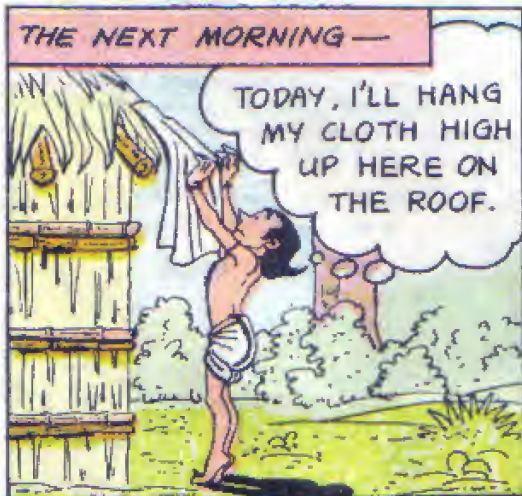
THE MAN WENT IN AND CAME BACK WITH IT.

HERE YOU ARE, HOLY SAGE.



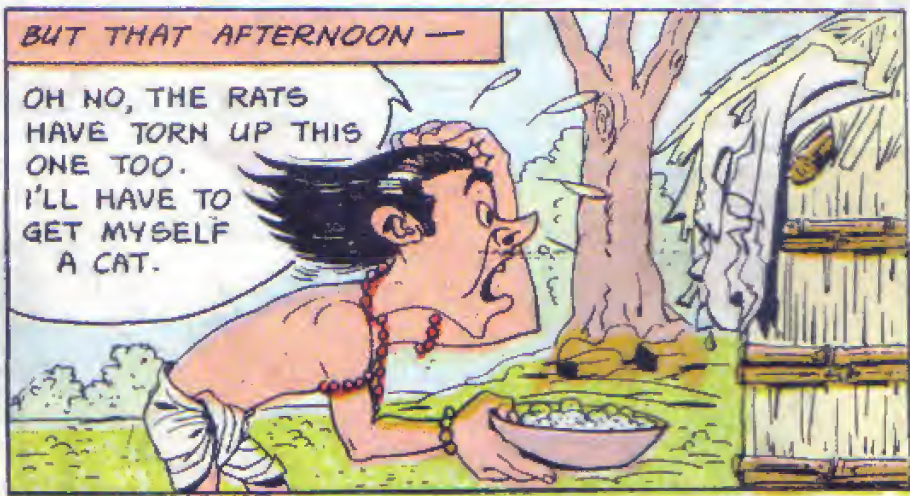
THE NEXT MORNING —

TODAY, I'LL HANG MY CLOTH HIGH UP HERE ON THE ROOF.

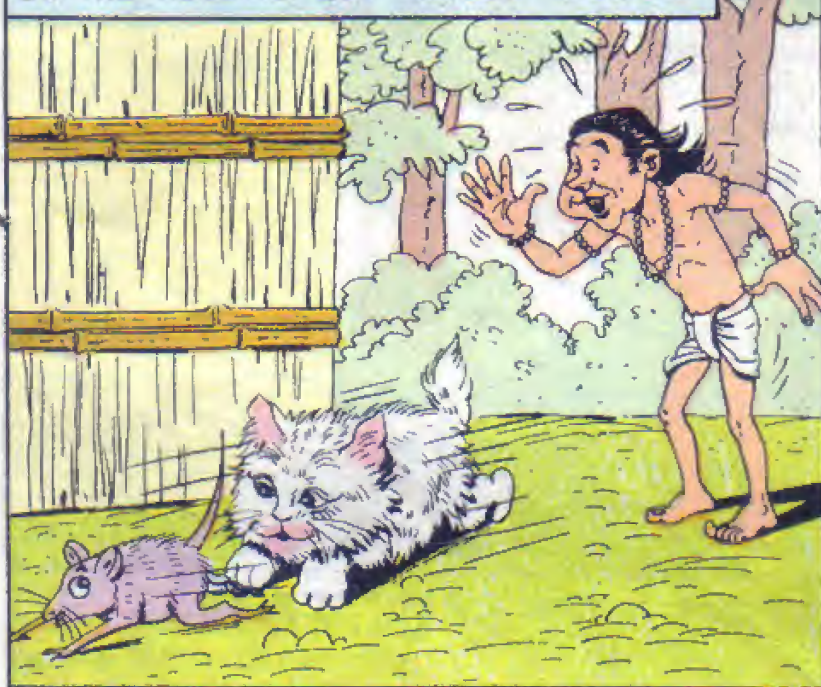


BUT THAT AFTERNOON —

OH NO, THE RATS HAVE TORN UP THIS ONE TOO. I'LL HAVE TO GET MYSELF A CAT.



SO THE ASCETIC GOT HIMSELF A CAT...

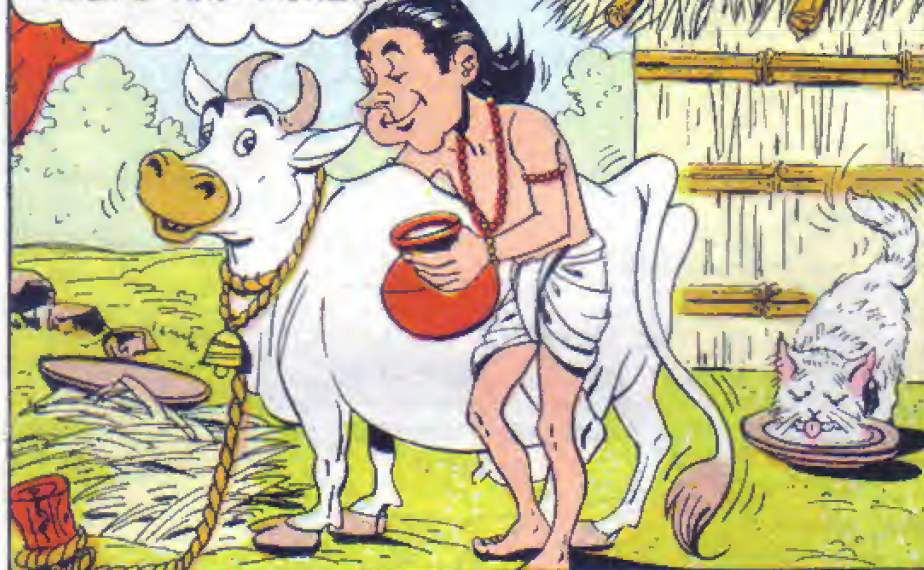


...AND SOON, THE RATS STOPPED TROUBLING HIM.

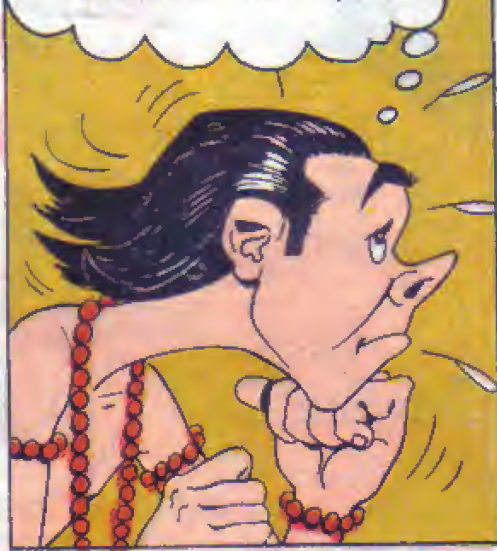


AND SO HE GOT HIMSELF A COW.

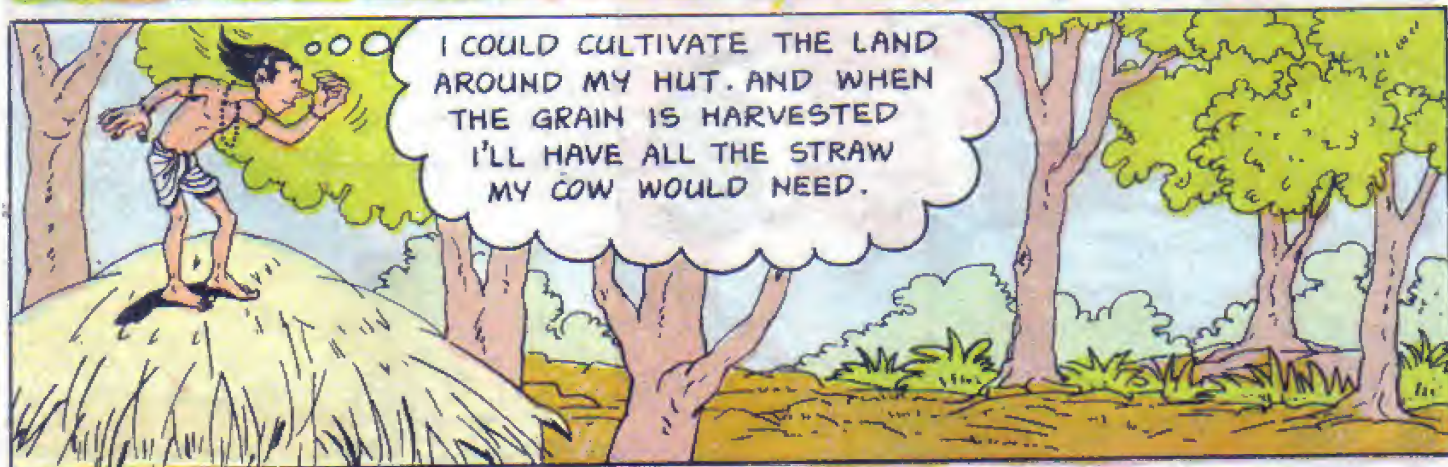
MY CAT HAS AS MUCH MILK AS IT NEEDS AND MORE.



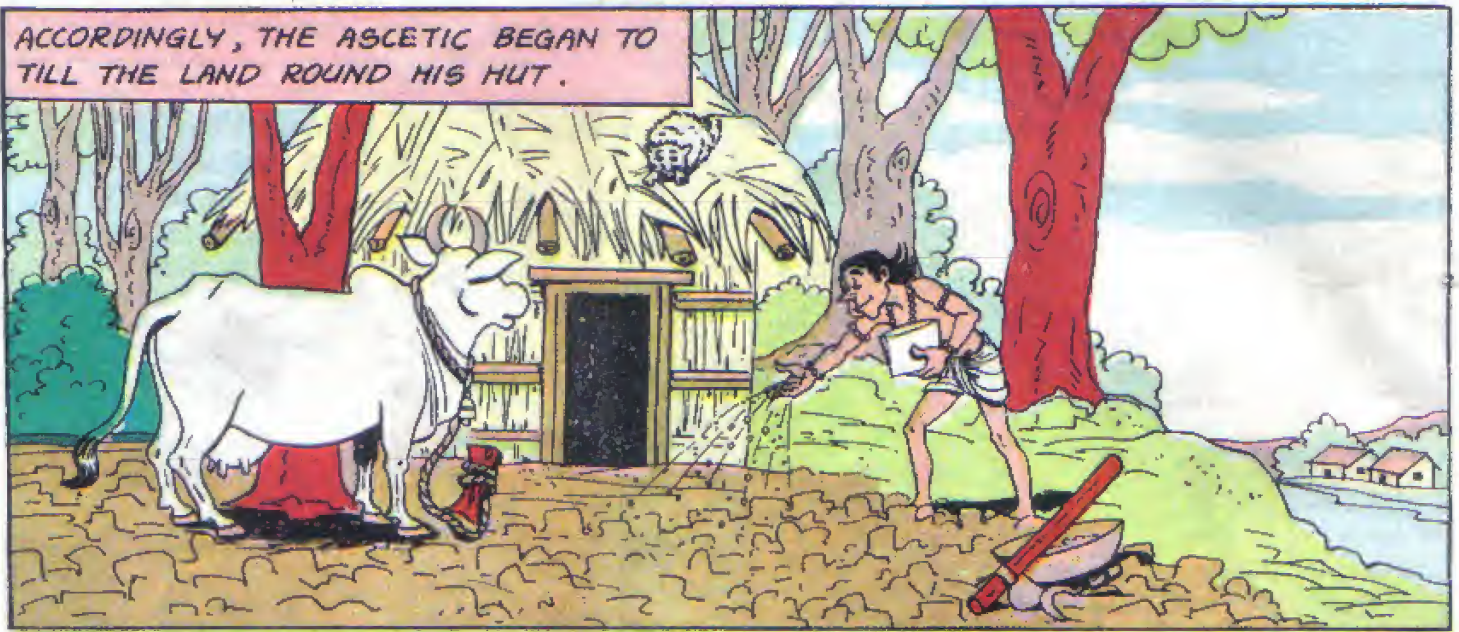
BUT I NEED STRAW TO FEED MY COW. HOW SHALL I GO ABOUT GETTING THAT?



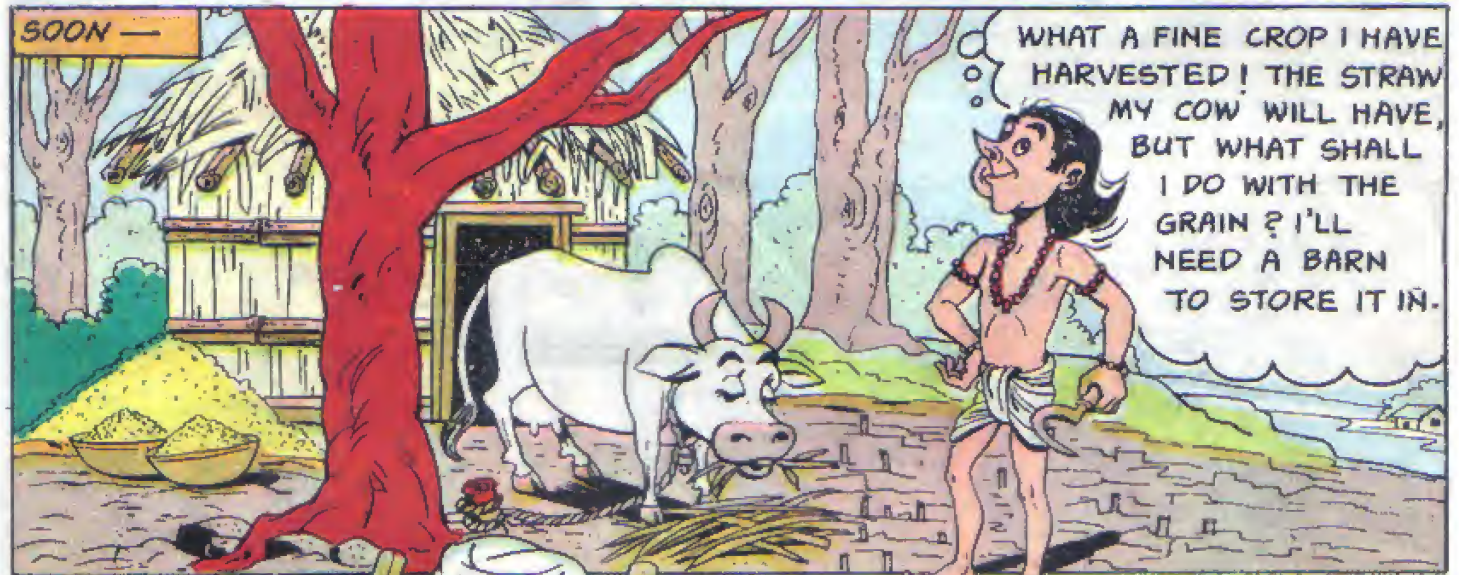
I COULD CULTIVATE THE LAND AROUND MY HUT. AND WHEN THE GRAIN IS HARVESTED I'LL HAVE ALL THE STRAW MY COW WOULD NEED.



ACCORDINGLY, THE ASCETIC BEGAN TO TILL THE LAND ROUND HIS HUT.

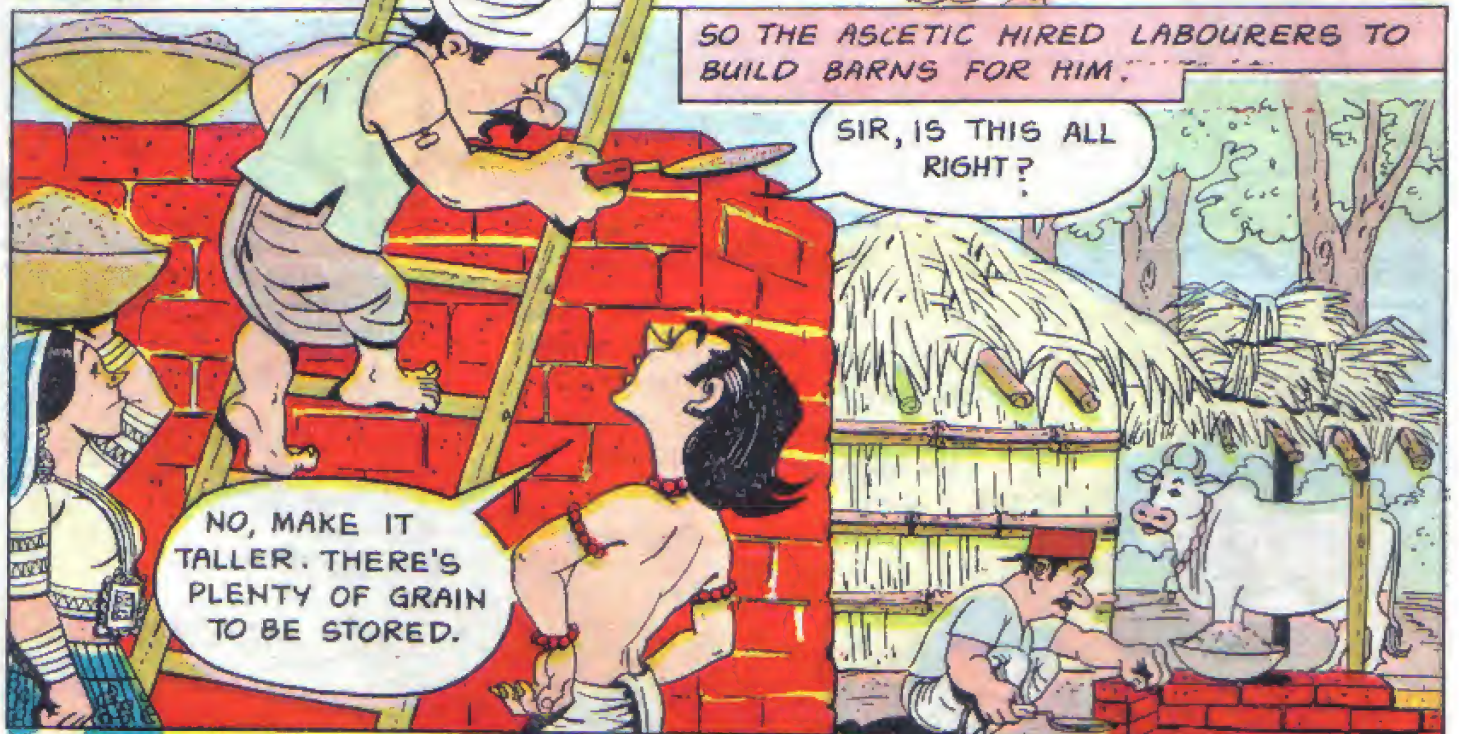


SOON —



WHAT A FINE CROP I HAVE HARVESTED! THE STRAW MY COW WILL HAVE, BUT WHAT SHALL I DO WITH THE GRAIN? I'LL NEED A BARN TO STORE IT IN.

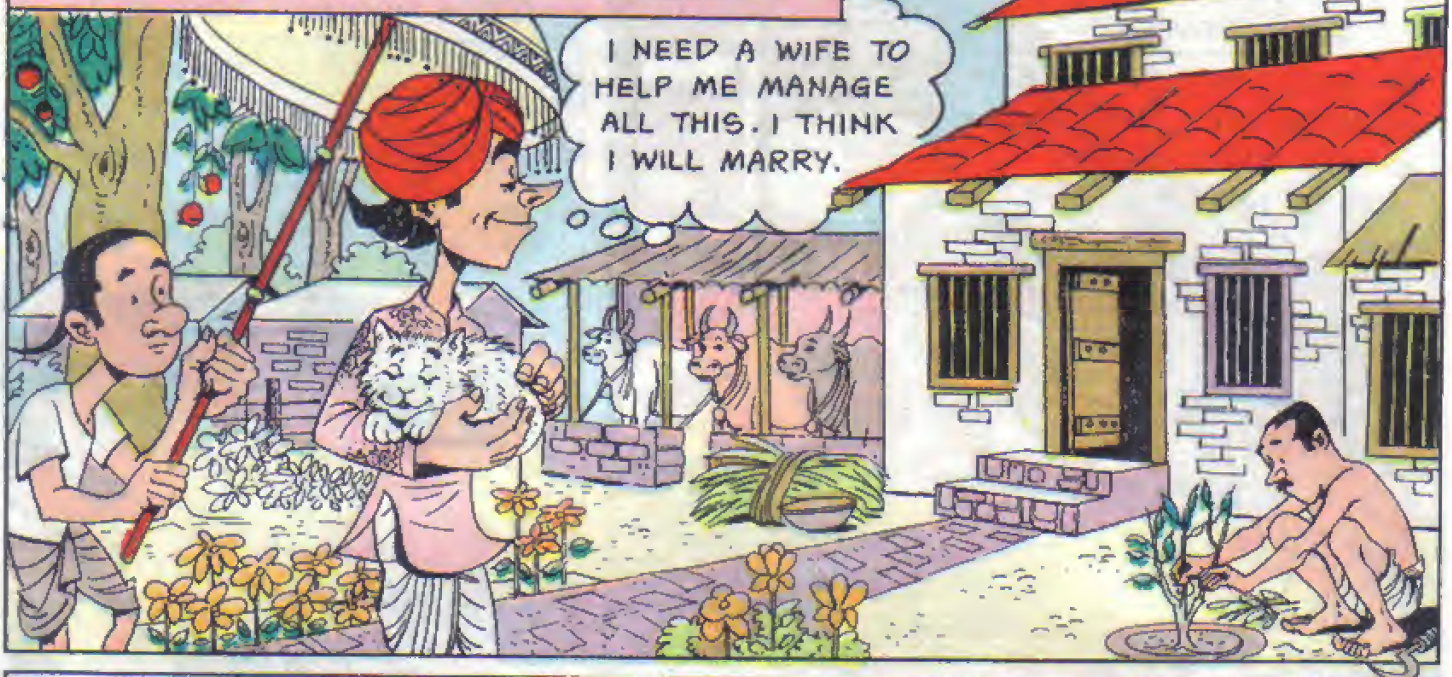
SO THE ASCETIC HIRED LABOURERS TO BUILD BARNs FOR HIM.



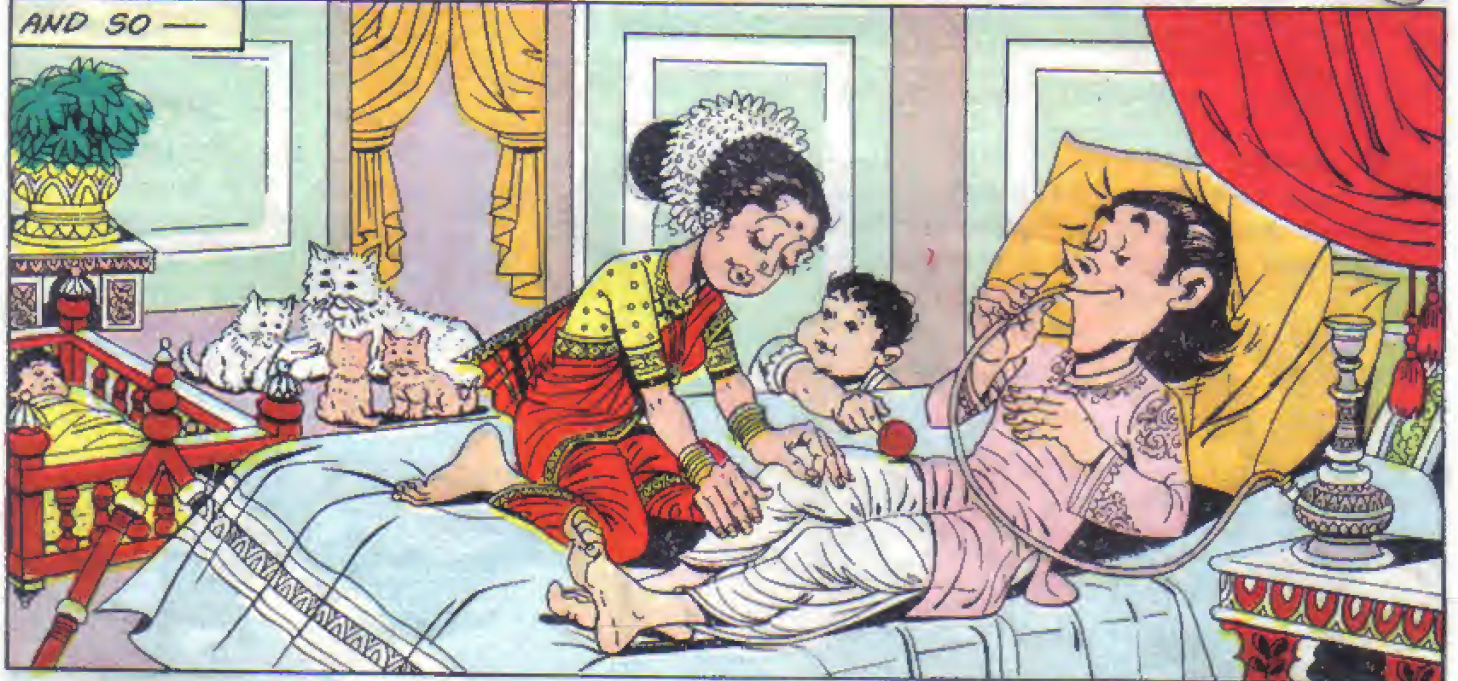
SIR, IS THIS ALL RIGHT?

NO, MAKE IT TALLER. THERE'S PLENTY OF GRAIN TO BE STORED.

THE ASCETIC HAD NOW BECOME A LANDLORD.



AND SO —

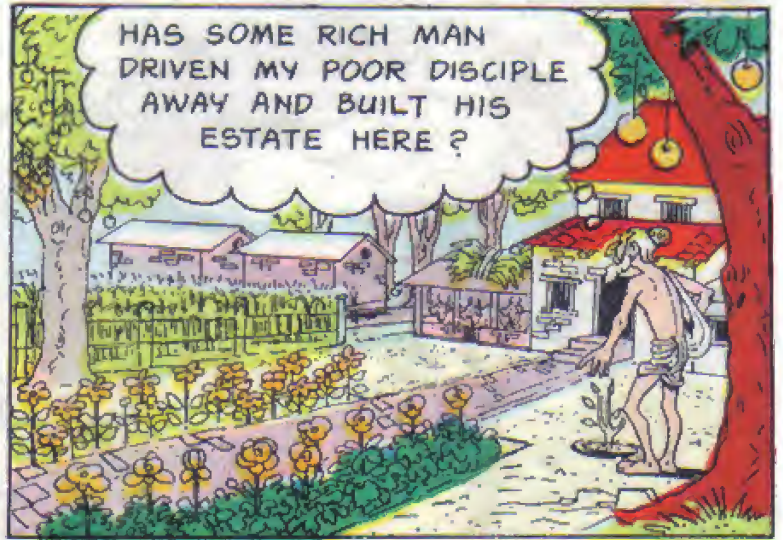


ONE FINE DAY, THE GURU RETURNED FROM HIS PILGRIMAGE.

AM I ON THE RIGHT ROAD? WHERE IS MY DISCIPLE'S LITTLE HUT?



HAS SOME RICH MAN DRIVEN MY POOR DISCIPLE AWAY AND BUILT HIS ESTATE HERE?



WHEN A SERVANT CAME OUT OF THE HOUSE, THE GURU WENT UP TO HIM.

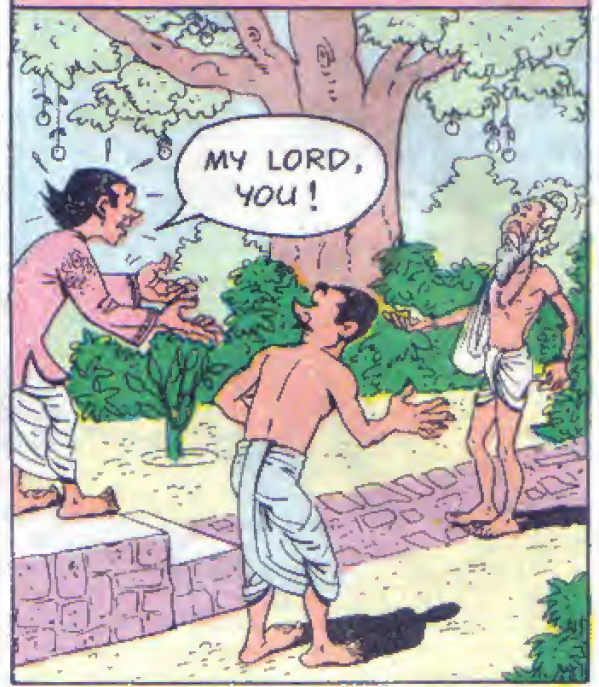
MY GOOD MAN, AN ASCETIC USED TO LIVE HERE ONCE. DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW?

ER... I... HE...



JUST THEN, THE SERVANT'S MASTER HIMSELF CAME OUT.

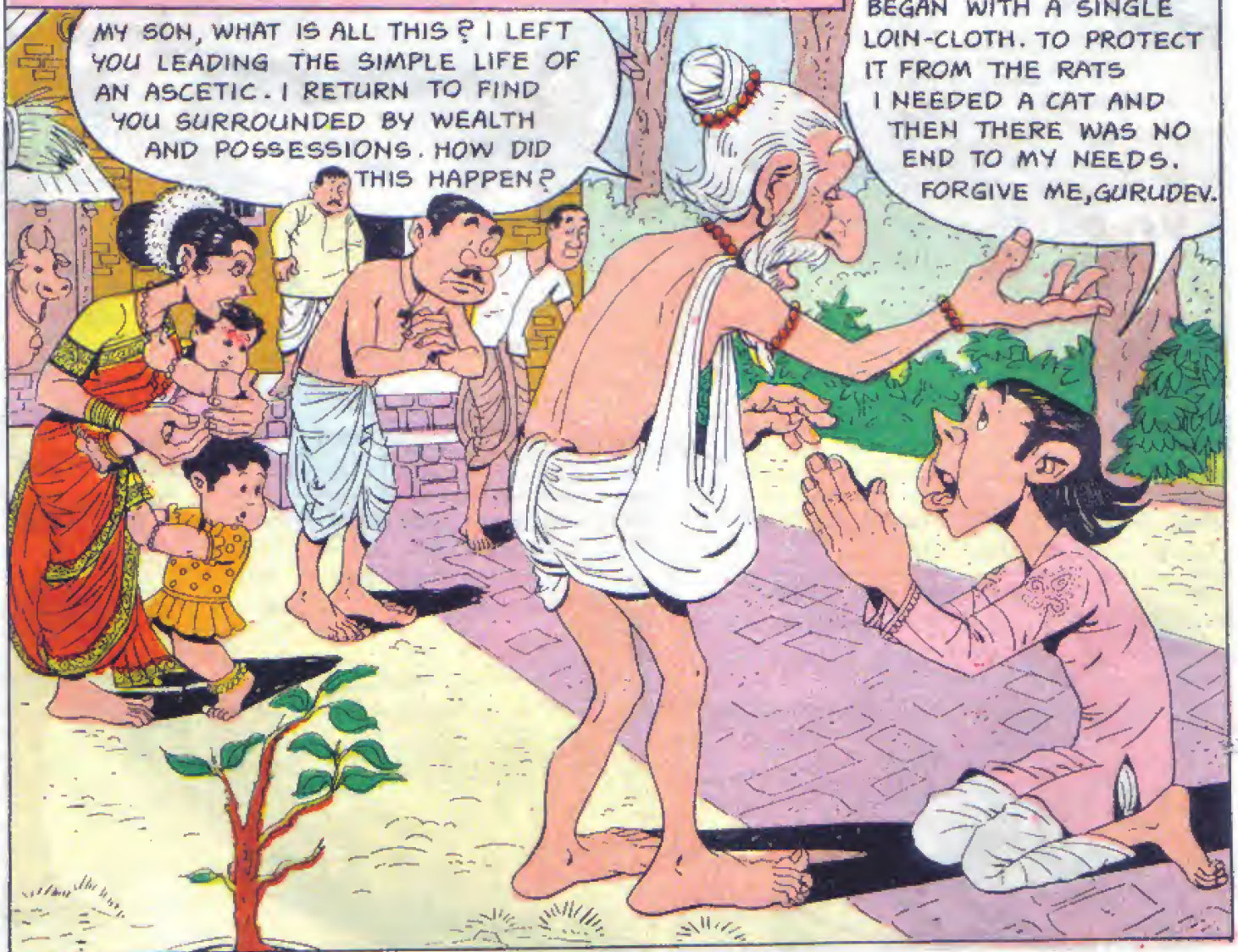
MY LORD, YOU!



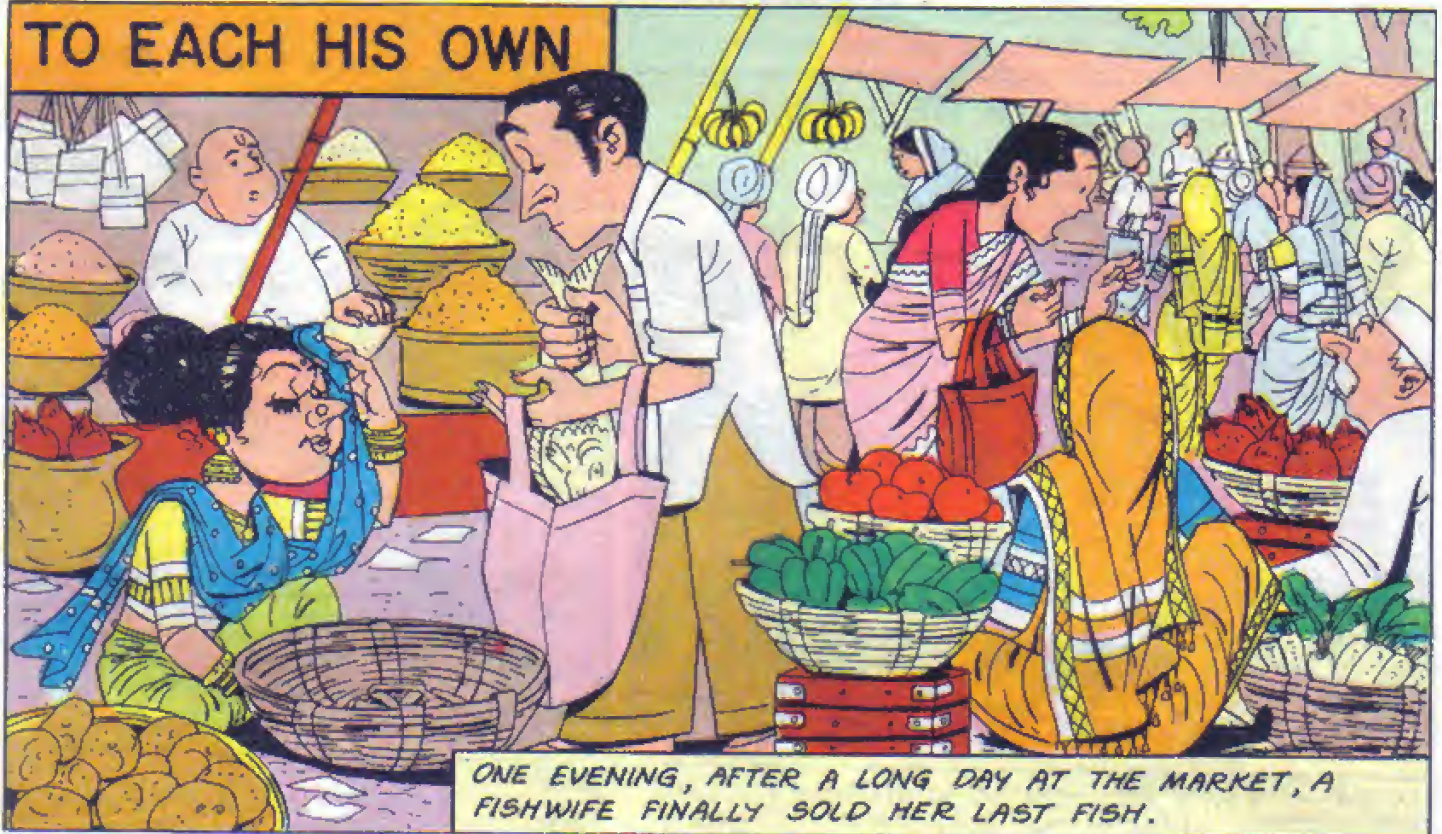
HE RUSHED FORWARD AND FELL AT HIS GURU'S FEET.

MY SON, WHAT IS ALL THIS? I LEFT YOU LEADING THE SIMPLE LIFE OF AN ASCETIC. I RETURN TO FIND YOU SURROUNDED BY WEALTH AND POSSESSIONS. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

OH GURUDEV, IT ALL BEGAN WITH A SINGLE LOIN-CLOTH. TO PROTECT IT FROM THE RATS I NEEDED A CAT AND THEN THERE WAS NO END TO MY NEEDS. FORGIVE ME, GURUDEV.

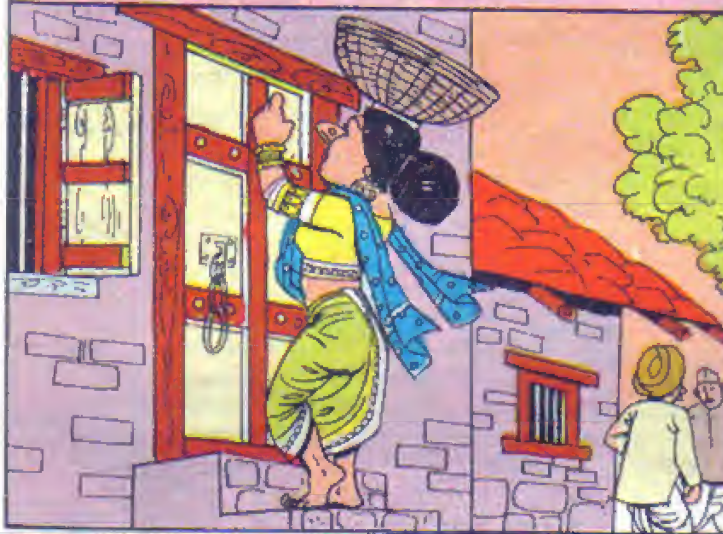


TO EACH HIS OWN



ONE EVENING, AFTER A LONG DAY AT THE MARKET, A FISHWIFE FINALLY SOLD HER LAST FISH.

ON HER WAY HOME, SHE STOPPED AT HER FRIEND'S HOUSE AND KNOCKED.



HER FRIEND, WHO WAS A FLOWER-GIRL, ANSWERED THE DOOR.



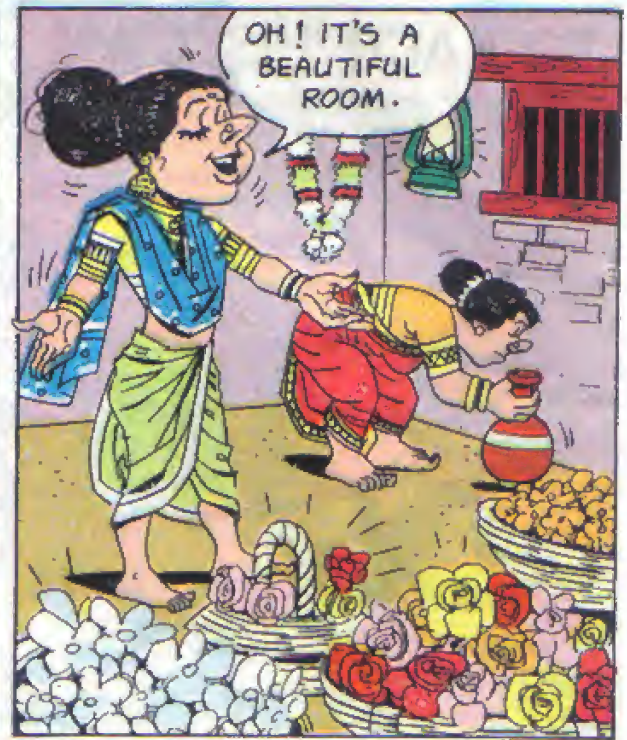
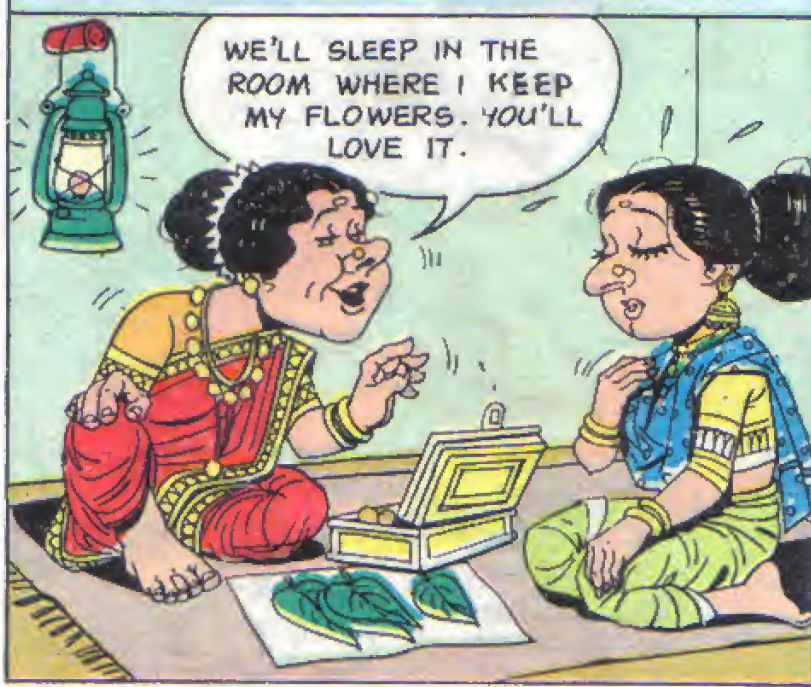
WHY, IT'S YOU!
COME IN, MY
FRIEND.

YOU MUST HAVE
DINNER WITH ME AND
SPEND THE NIGHT HERE.
WE CAN HAVE A LONG
CHAT.

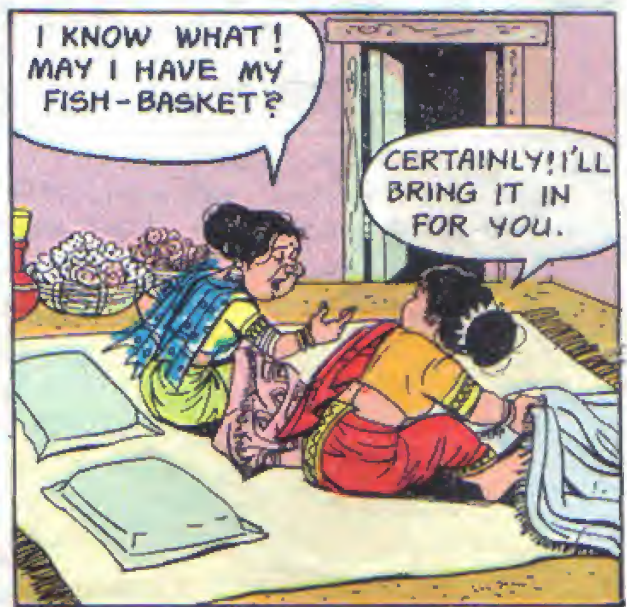
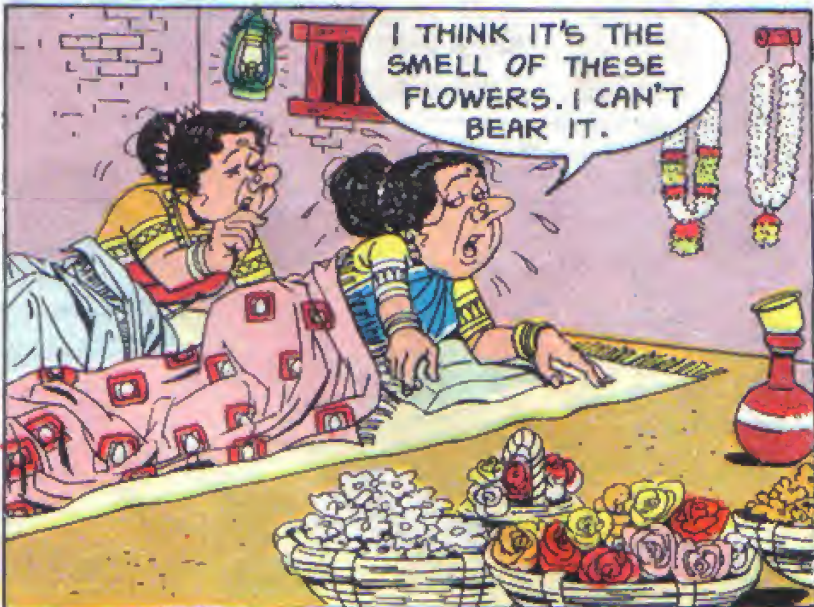
ALL RIGHT, MY
FRIEND.



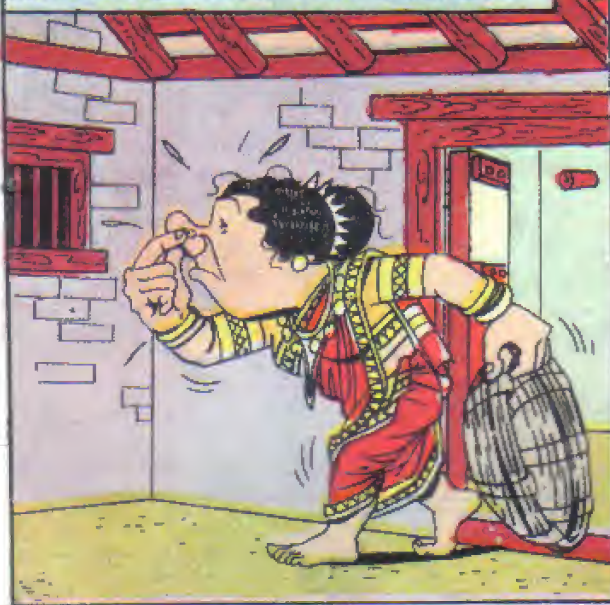
LATER WHEN IT WAS TIME TO GO TO BED —



LATER —



THE FRIEND WENT OUT AND RETURNED WITH THE BASKET.

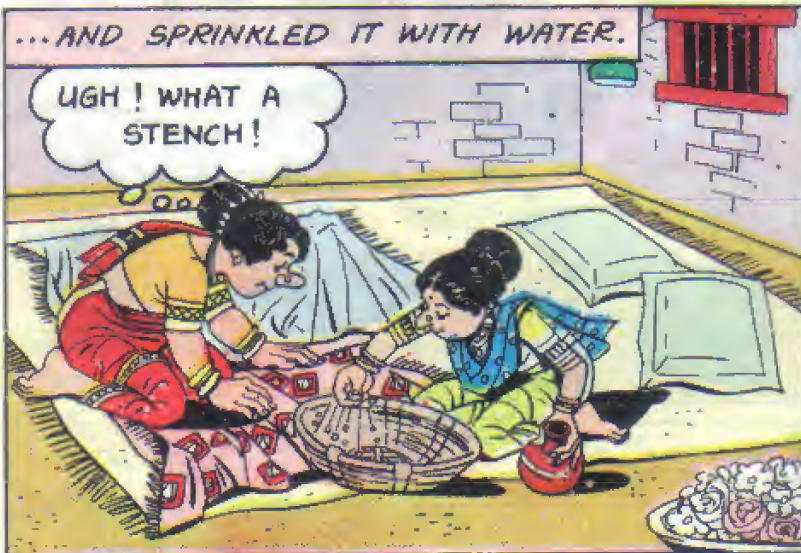


THE FISHWIFE TOOK IT...



...AND SPRINKLED IT WITH WATER.

UGH! WHAT A STENCH!

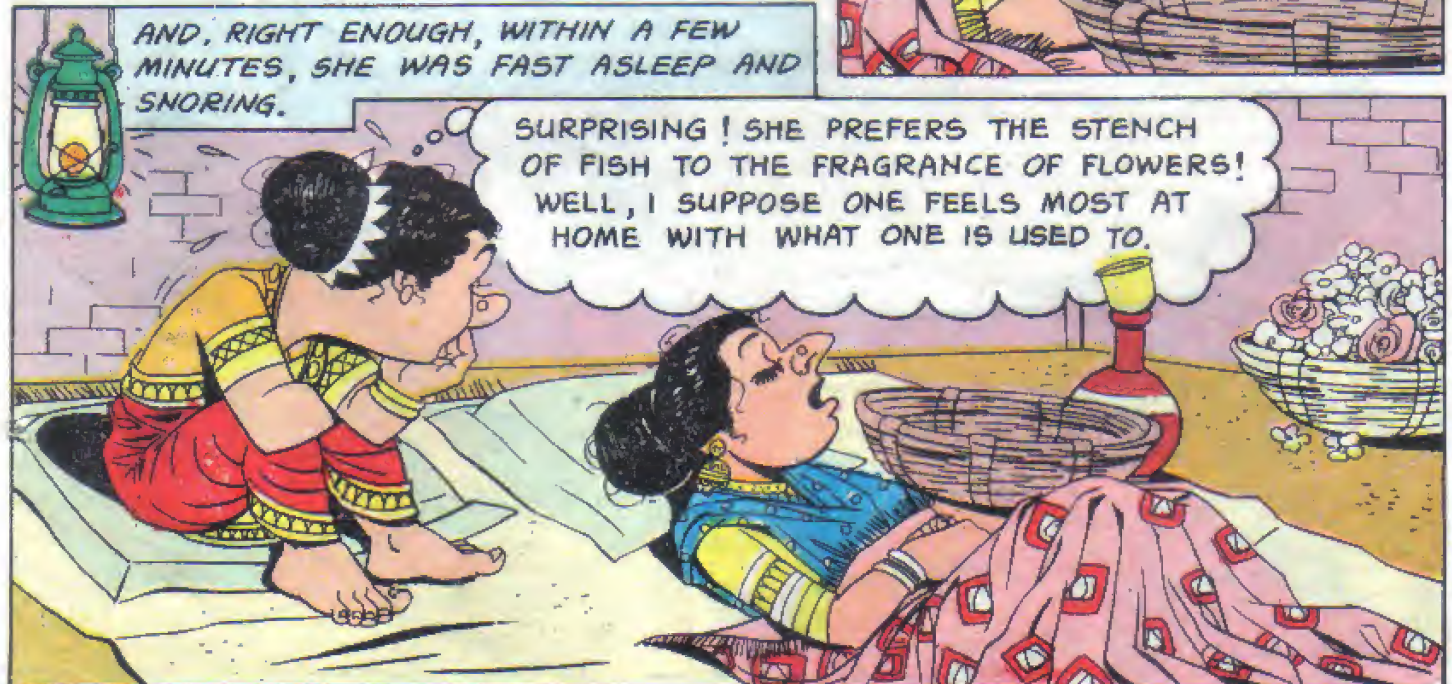


AH! THIS IS MUCH BETTER. NOW I SHALL SLEEP LIKE A LOG.

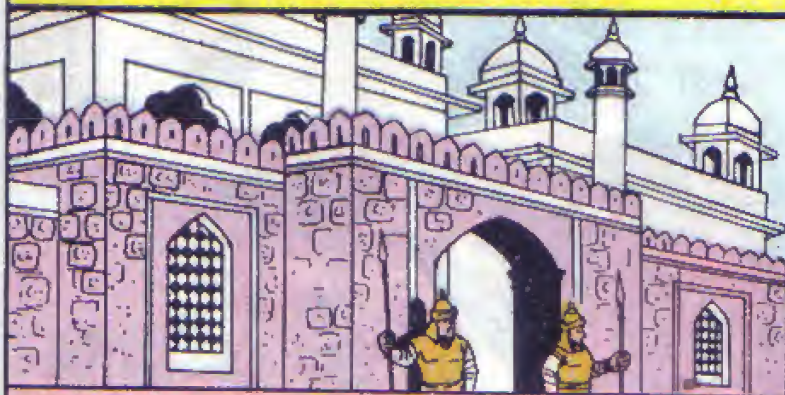


AND, RIGHT ENOUGH, WITHIN A FEW MINUTES, SHE WAS FAST ASLEEP AND SNORING.

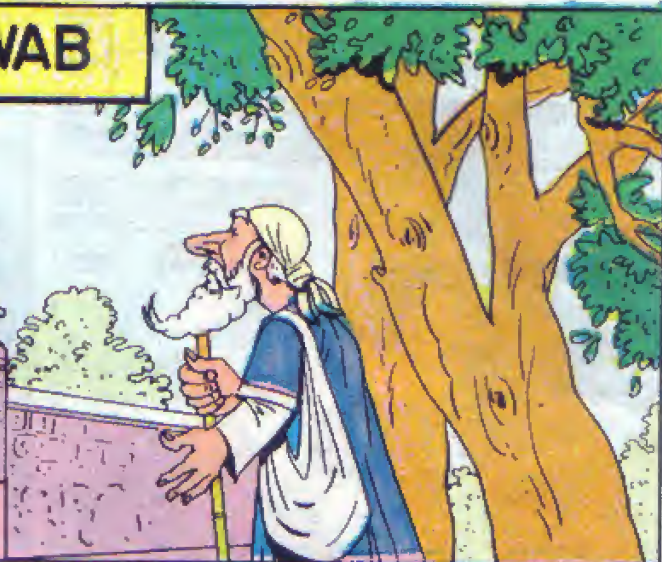
SURPRISING! SHE PREFERS THE STENCH OF FISH TO THE FRAGRANCE OF FLOWERS! WELL, I SUPPOSE ONE FEELS MOST AT HOME WITH WHAT ONE IS USED TO.



THE HERMIT AND THE NAWAB

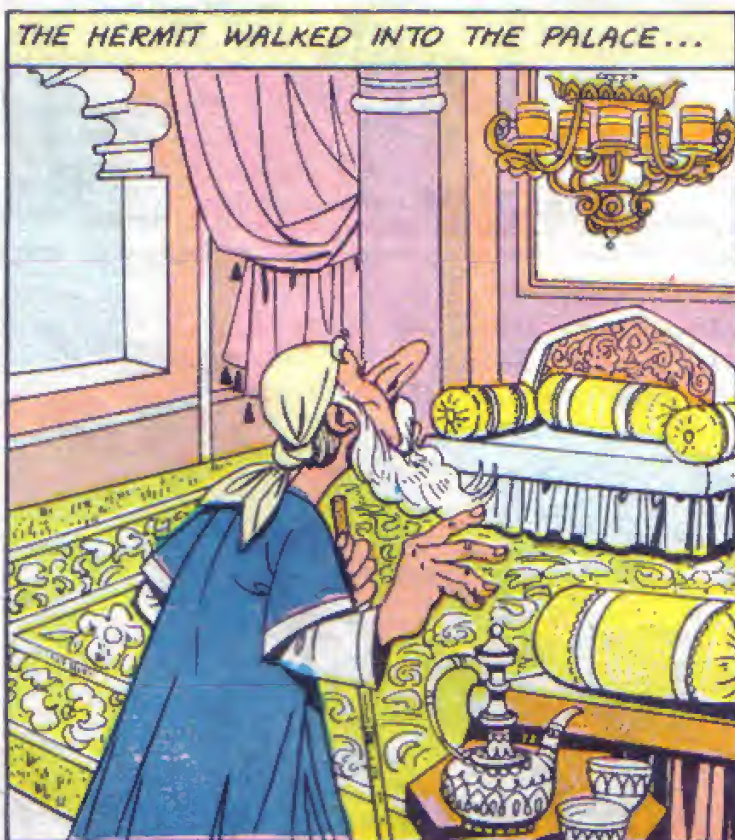


ONCE A HERMIT WENT TO THE PALACE OF A NAWAB TO BEG FOR ALMS.



GOOD SIR, I HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THE NAWAB.

WALK STRAIGHT IN, HOLY ONE. YOU'LL FIND HIM IN THE PRAYER-ROOM.



THE HERMIT WALKED INTO THE PALACE...



...AND UP TO THE PRAYER-ROOM.

I'LL WAIT FOR HIM TO FINISH HIS PRAYERS.

THE NAWAB ENDED HIS PRAYERS WITH THE USUAL REQUEST FOR PROSPERITY.

O LORD,
I SALUTE YOU
WITH DEVOTION.
GIVE ME MONEY,
GIVE ME RICHES,
GIVE ME FAME
AND FORTUNE...

OH! OH! I'VE
COME TO THE
WRONG PLACE!

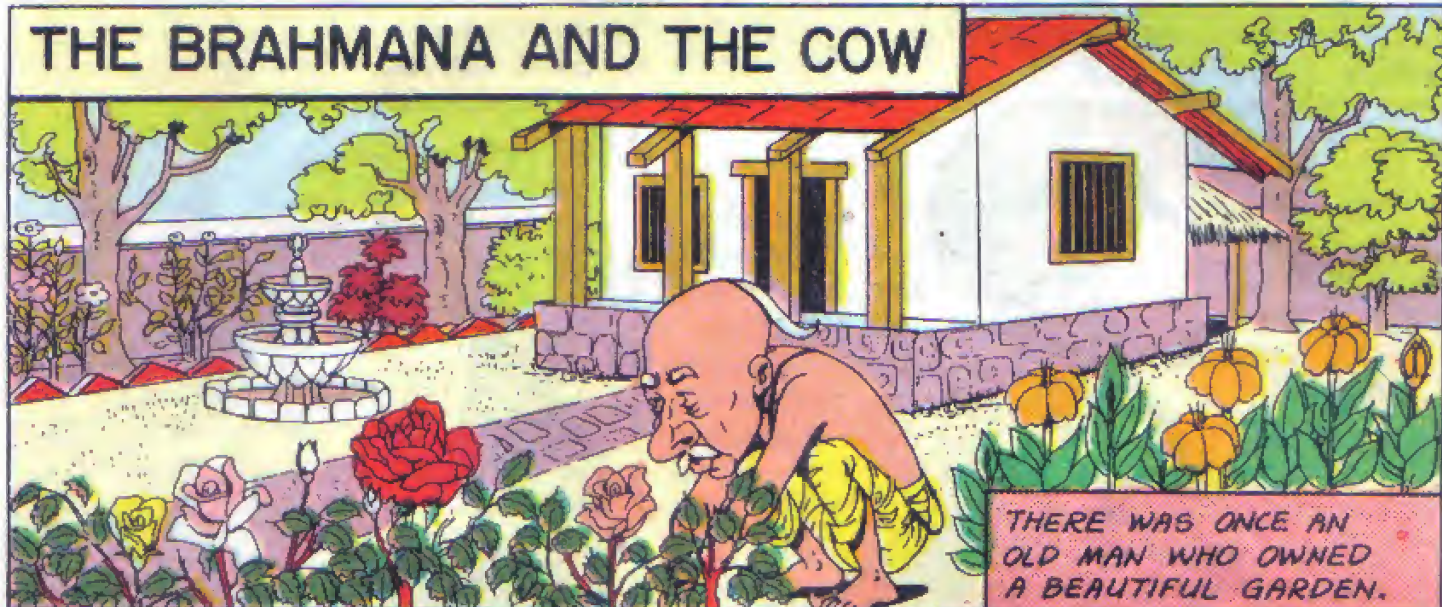
AS HE TURNED TO WALK AWAY, THE
NAWAB SAW HIM.

WAIT, MY GOOD MAN!
YOU CAME TO SEE ME.
WHY ARE YOU GOING
AWAY WITHOUT EVEN
SPEAKING TO
ME?

I CAME TO
ASK YOU FOR
MONEY, BUT WHEN
I HEARD YOU
BEGGING FOR
MONEY AND
RICHES FROM
GOD, I CHANGED
MY MIND.

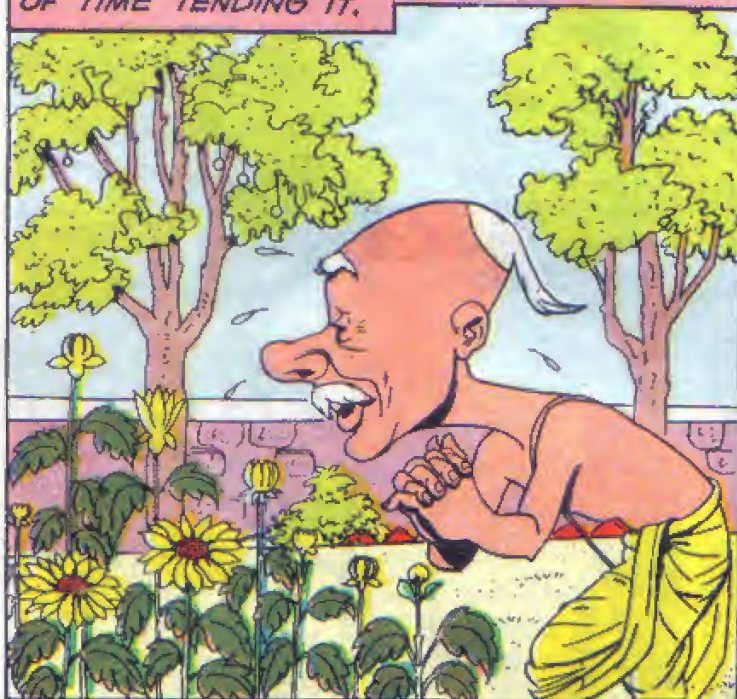
WHY SHOULD I BEG FROM
ONE WHO IS HIMSELF
A BEGGAR? IF I MUST
BEG, LET ME BEG
FROM GOD.

THE BRAHMANA AND THE COW



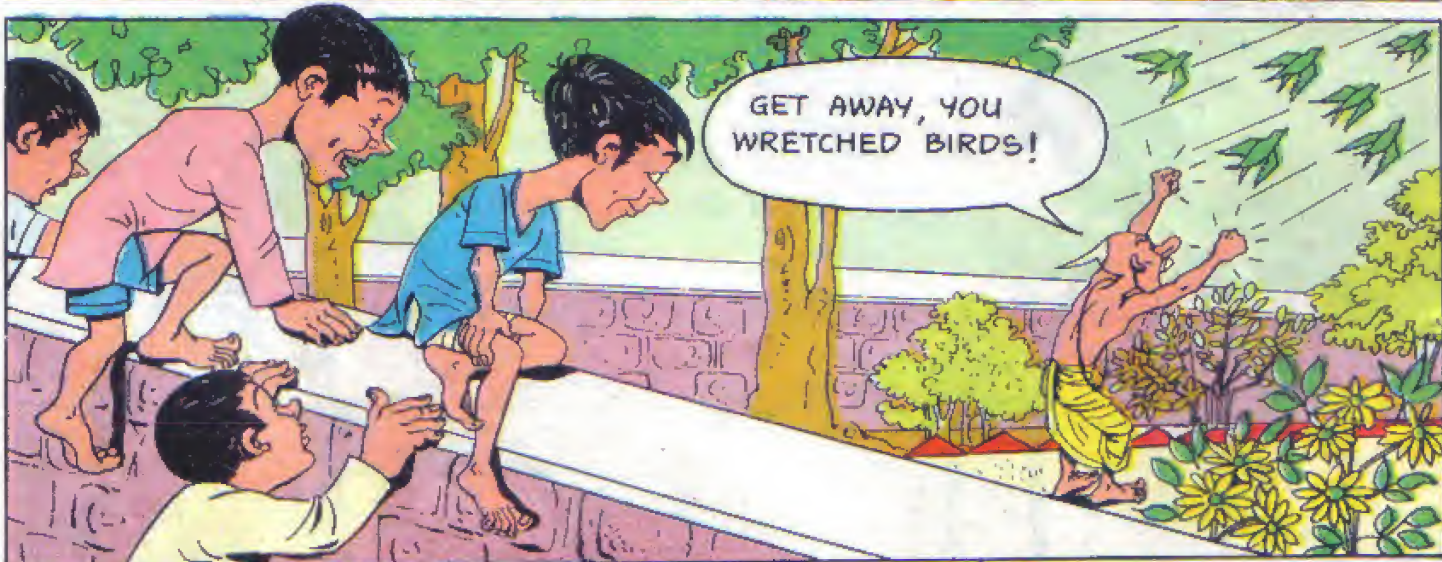
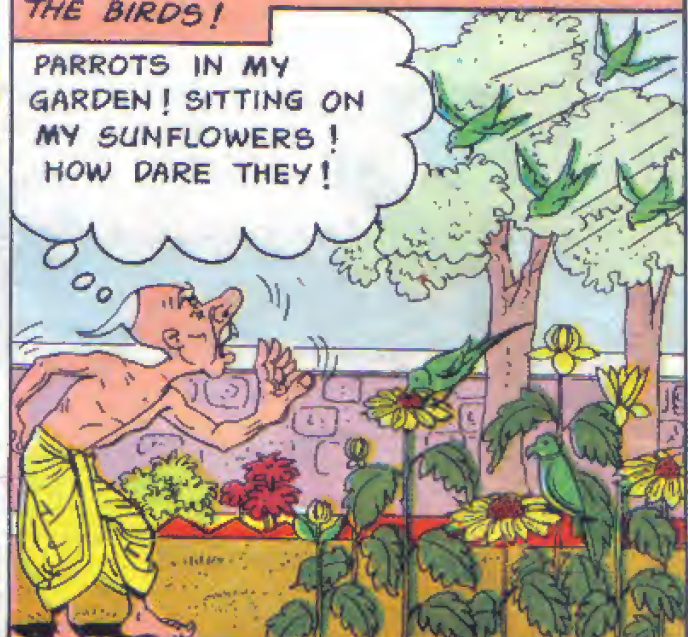
THERE WAS ONCE AN OLD MAN WHO OWNED A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN.

HE LOVED IT DEARLY AND SPENT A LOT OF TIME TENDING IT.



BUT HE WAS VERY SELFISH. HE DID NOT WANT TO SHARE HIS BEAUTIFUL GARDEN WITH ANYONE. NOT EVEN THE BIRDS!

PARROTS IN MY GARDEN! SITTING ON MY SUNFLOWERS! HOW DARE THEY!

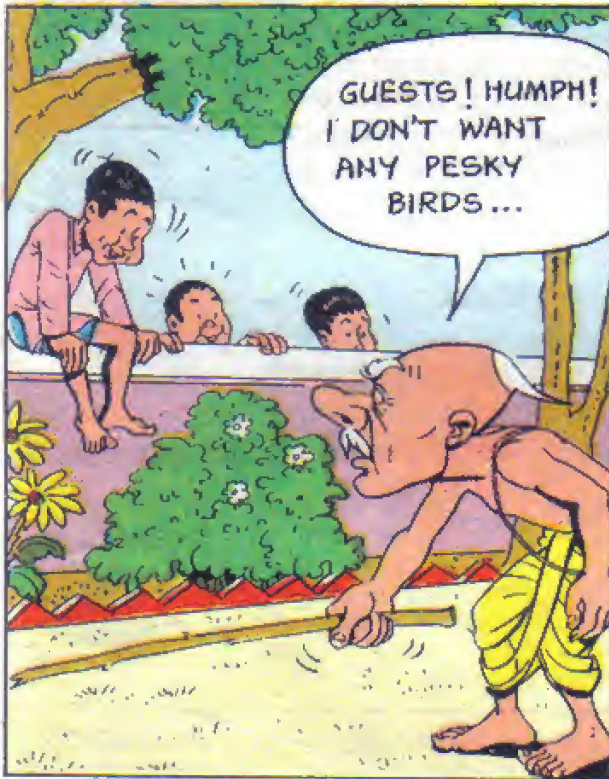


GET AWAY, YOU WRETCHED BIRDS!

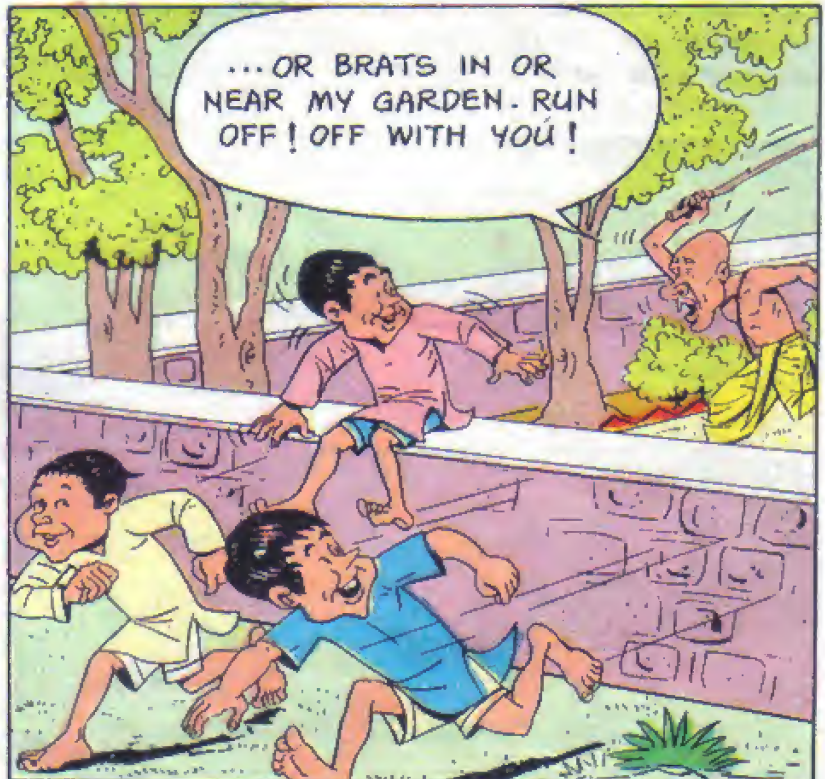
THE MISCHIEVOUS BOYS OF THE VILLAGE LIKED TO TEASE THE OLD MAN.

BE A SPORT, SIR. PARROTS LOVE TO EAT SUNFLOWER SEEDS. WHY DID YOU SHOO THEM AWAY?

BESIDES, YOU ARE A BRAHMANA, SIR. YOU MUST NOT BE RUDE TO YOUR GUESTS.



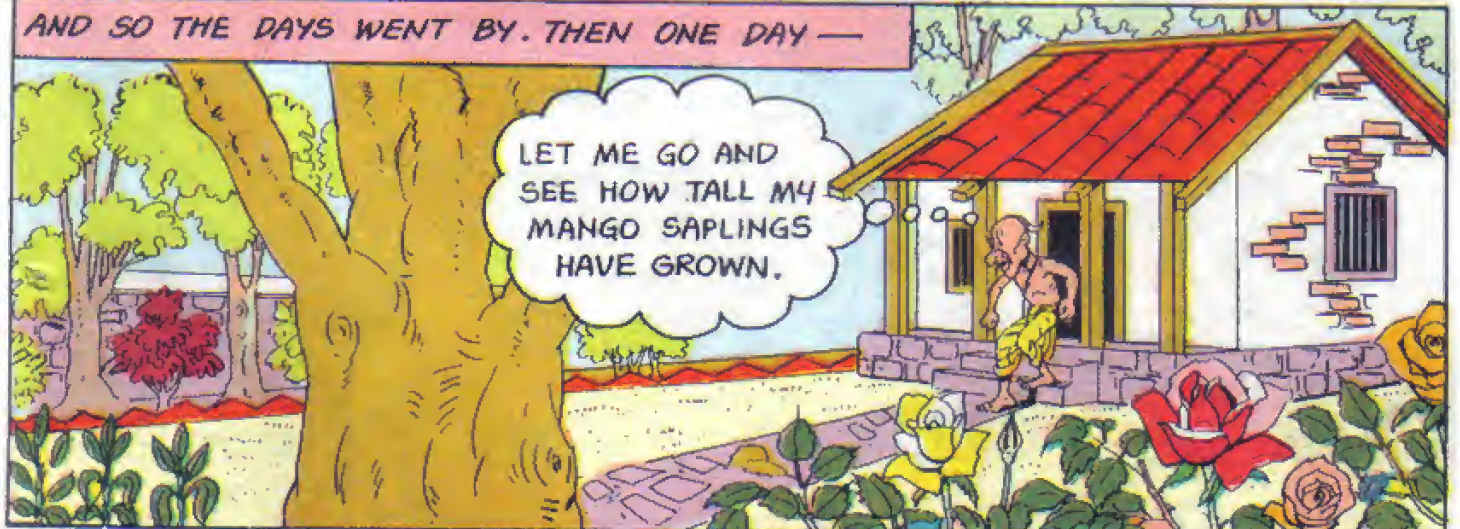
GUESTS! HUMPH! I DON'T WANT ANY PESKY BIRDS...

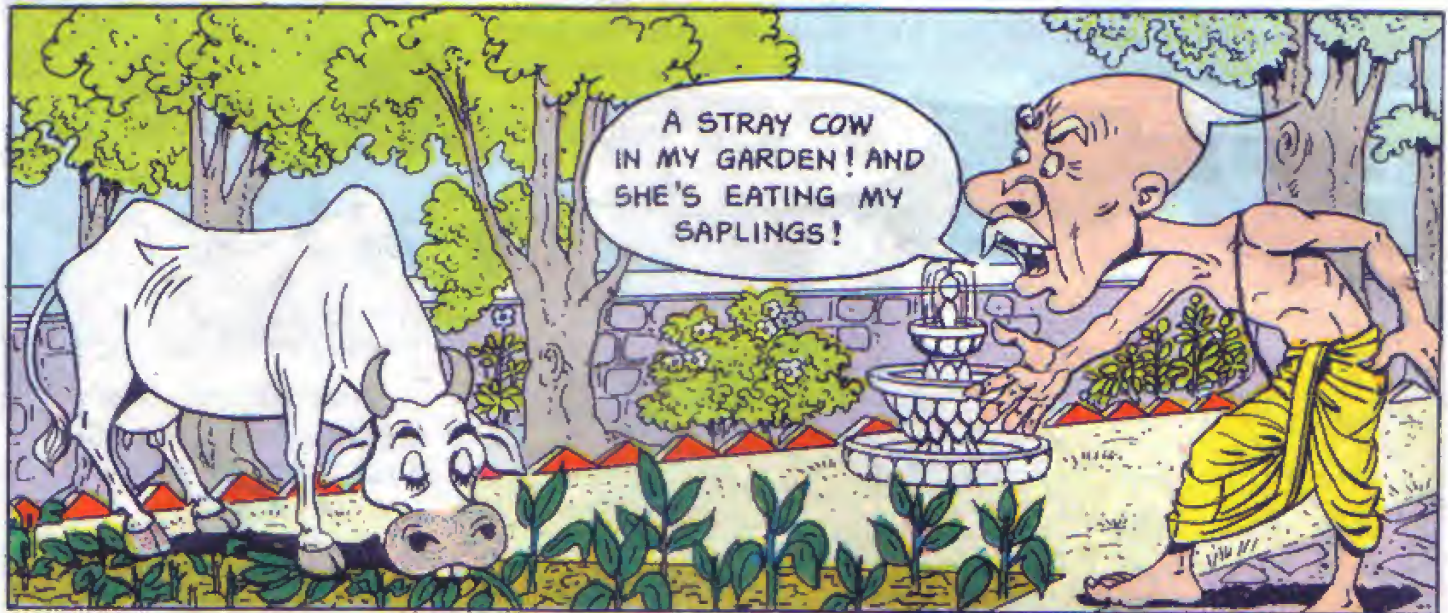


...OR BRATS IN OR NEAR MY GARDEN. RUN OFF! OFF WITH YOU!

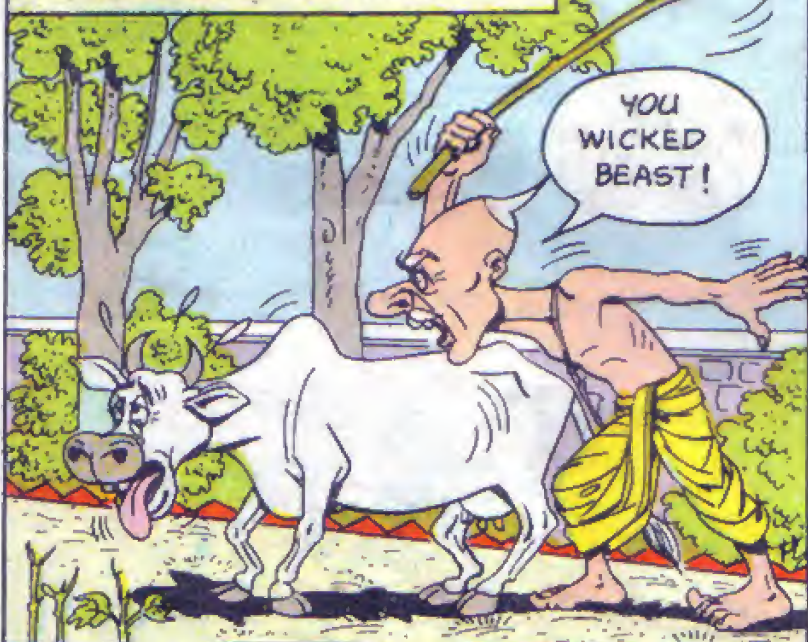
AND SO THE DAYS WENT BY. THEN ONE DAY —

LET ME GO AND SEE HOW TALL MY MANGO SAPPLINGS HAVE GROWN.

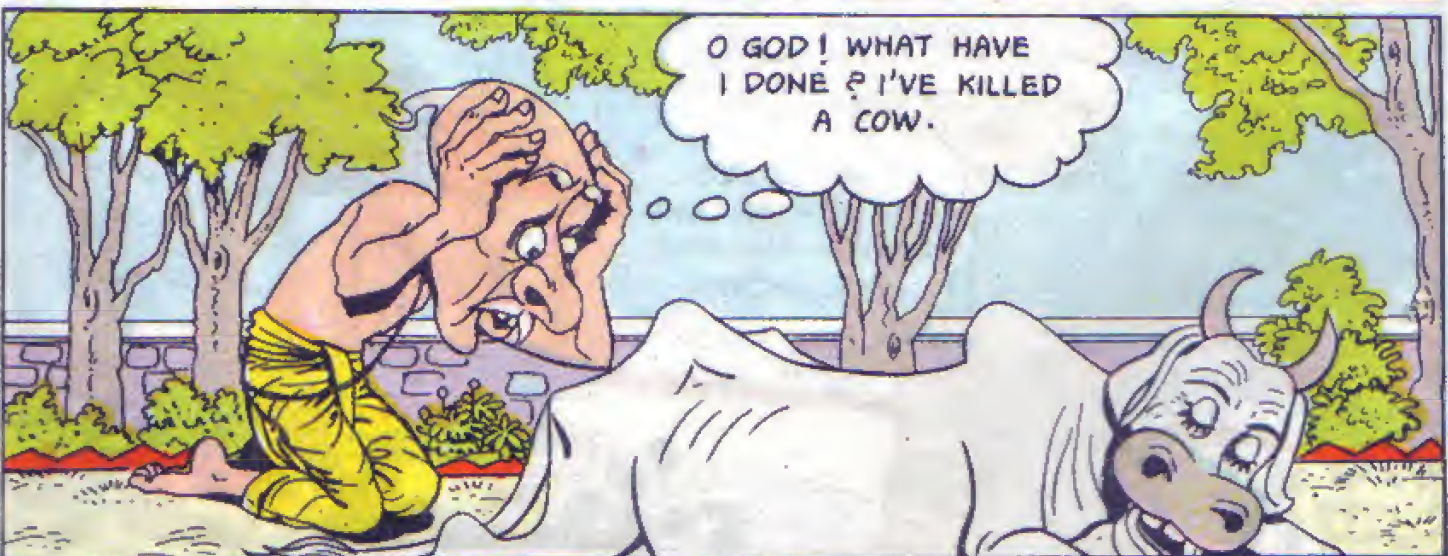
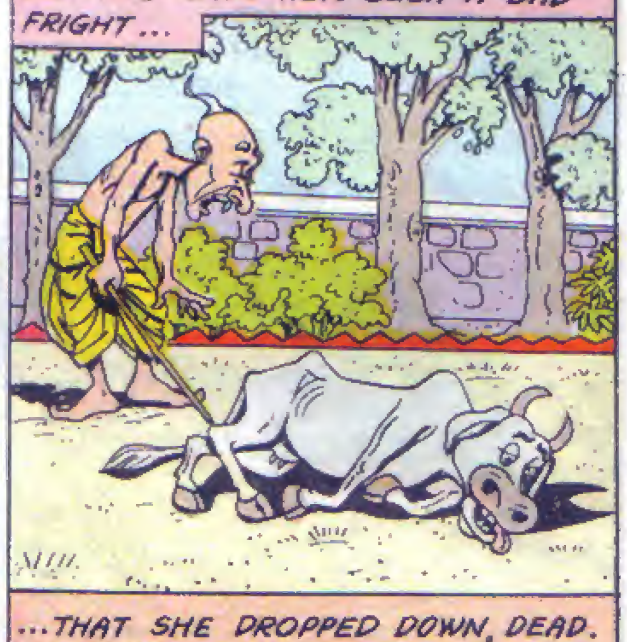




IN A FIT OF RAGE, THE BRAHMANA BEGAN TO BEAT THE COW WITH HIS STICK.



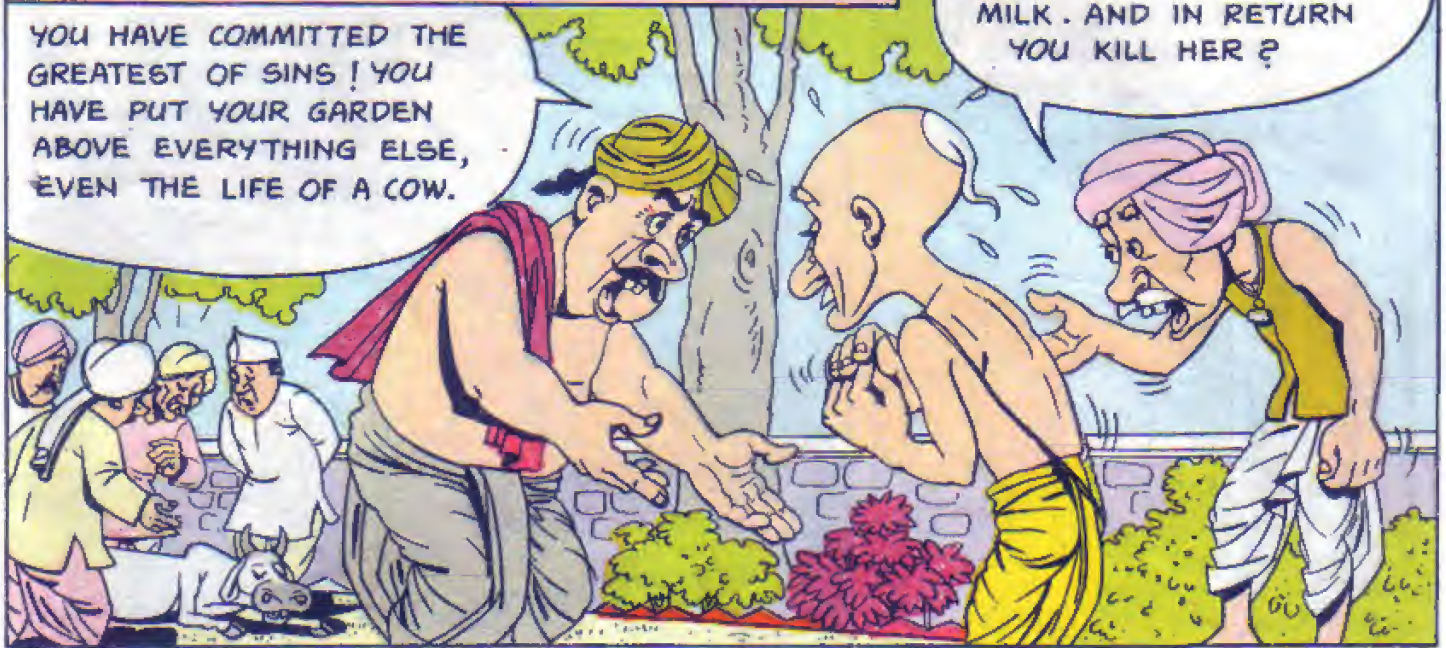
THE COW WAS ALREADY OLD, THIN AND HUNGRY. THE BRAHMANA'S BEATING GAVE HER SUCH A BAD FRIGHT ...



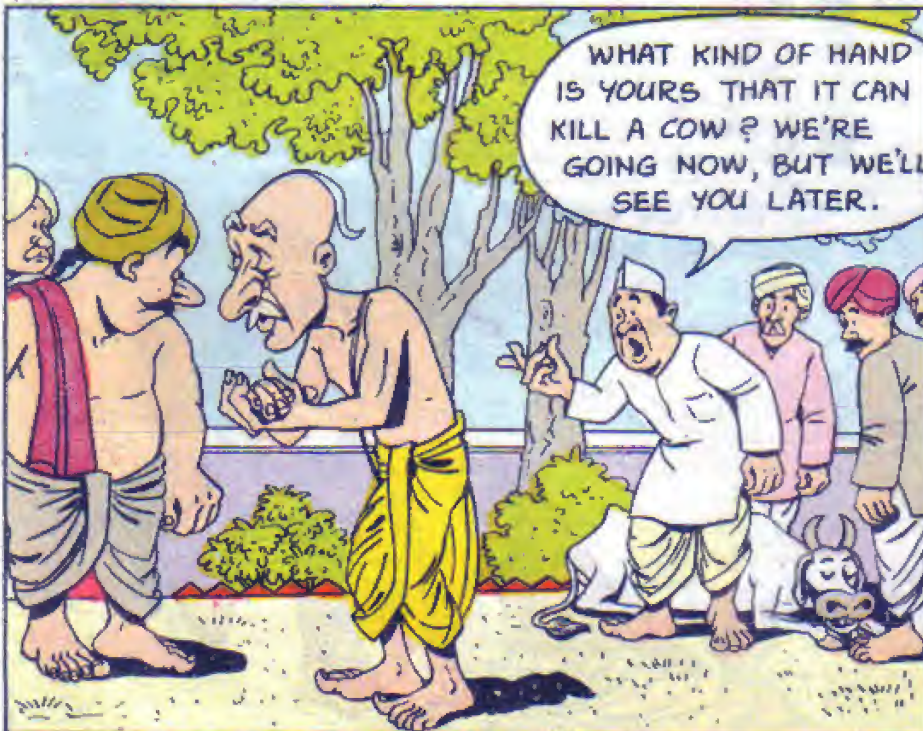
THE BRAHMANA HAD TO FACE THE VILLAGERS WHO HAD COME TO KNOW OF WHAT HE HAD DONE.

YOU HAVE COMMITTED THE GREATEST OF SINS! YOU HAVE PUT YOUR GARDEN ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE, EVEN THE LIFE OF A COW.

THE COW GIVES US HER SWEET AND NOURISHING MILK. AND IN RETURN YOU KILL HER?

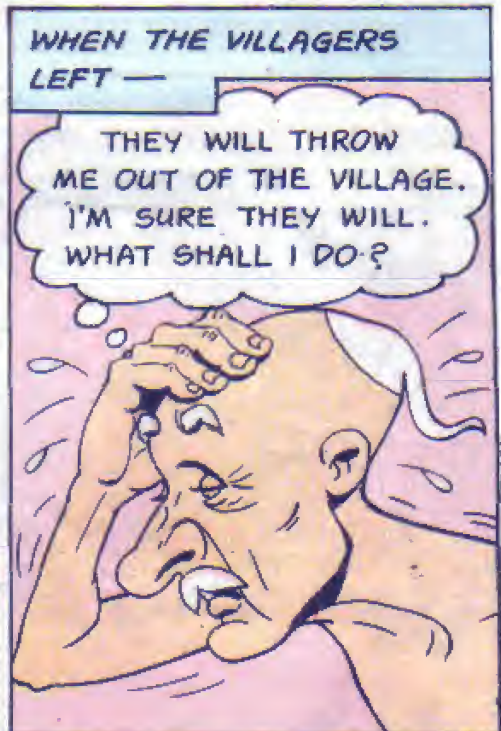


WHAT KIND OF HAND IS YOURS THAT IT CAN KILL A COW? WE'RE GOING NOW, BUT WE'LL SEE YOU LATER.

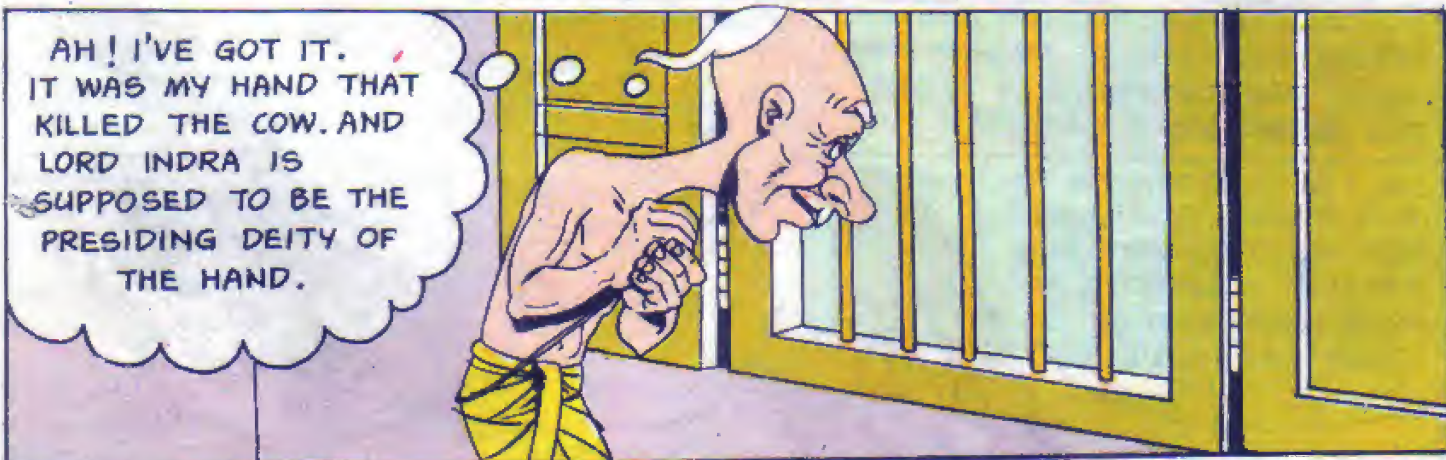


WHEN THE VILLAGERS LEFT —

THEY WILL THROW ME OUT OF THE VILLAGE. I'M SURE THEY WILL. WHAT SHALL I DO?



AH! I'VE GOT IT. IT WAS MY HAND THAT KILLED THE COW. AND LORD INDRA IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE PRESIDING DEITY OF THE HAND.



SO THE NEXT DAY, AT THE VILLAGE MARKET —

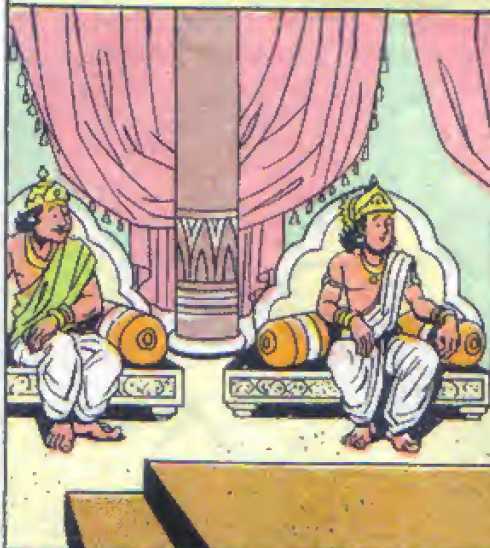
IT WAS NOT I! IT WAS INDRA. IT WAS HE WHO MADE MY HAND KILL THE COW.



IF IT IS INDRA WHO GUIDES THE HAND, IT IS NOT I WHO KILLED THE COW, BUT HE! HE IS TO BLAME! YES, I'LL TELL THE VILLAGERS THAT.



THIS NEWS SPREAD LIKE WILD-FIRE, TILL IT REACHED THE EARS OF INDRA HIMSELF.



I'D BETTER ASSUME A DISGUISE AND GO AND SEE THIS BRAHMANA.



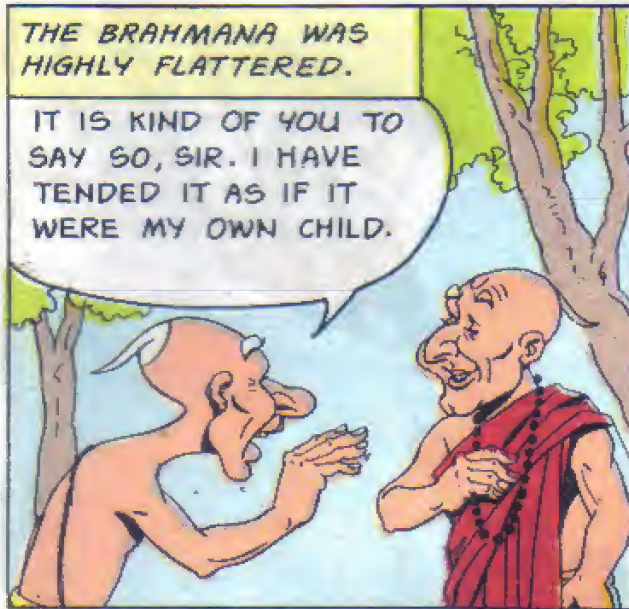
TAKING THE FORM OF AN OLD MAN, INDRA WALKED CASUALLY INTO THE BRAHMANA'S GARDEN.

SIR, I AM A STRANGER TO THIS TOWN. I WAS JUST PASSING THIS WAY AND COULDN'T HELP NOTICING YOUR GARDEN. IT IS VERY BEAUTIFUL.



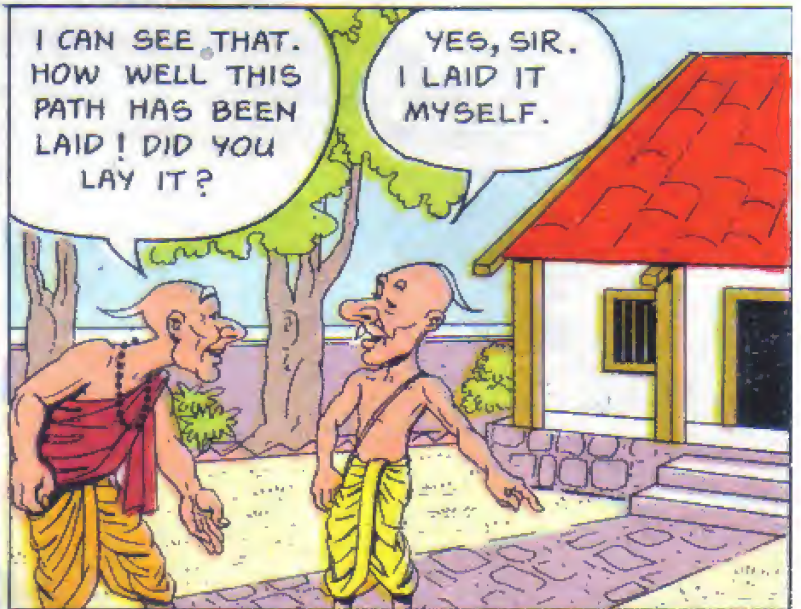
THE BRAHMANA WAS HIGHLY FLATTERED.

IT IS KIND OF YOU TO SAY SO, SIR. I HAVE TENDED IT AS IF IT WERE MY OWN CHILD.



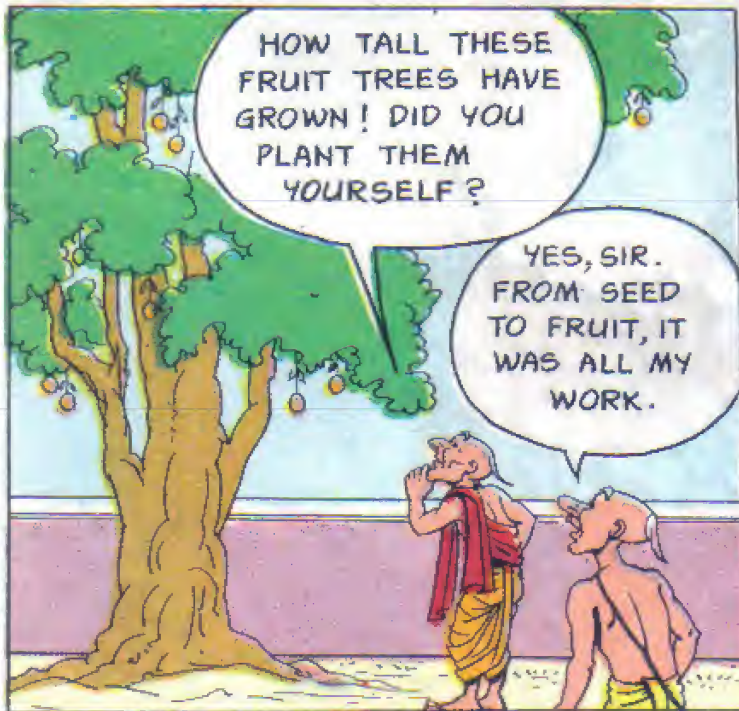
I CAN SEE THAT. HOW WELL THIS PATH HAS BEEN LAID! DID YOU LAY IT?

YES, SIR. I LAID IT MYSELF.



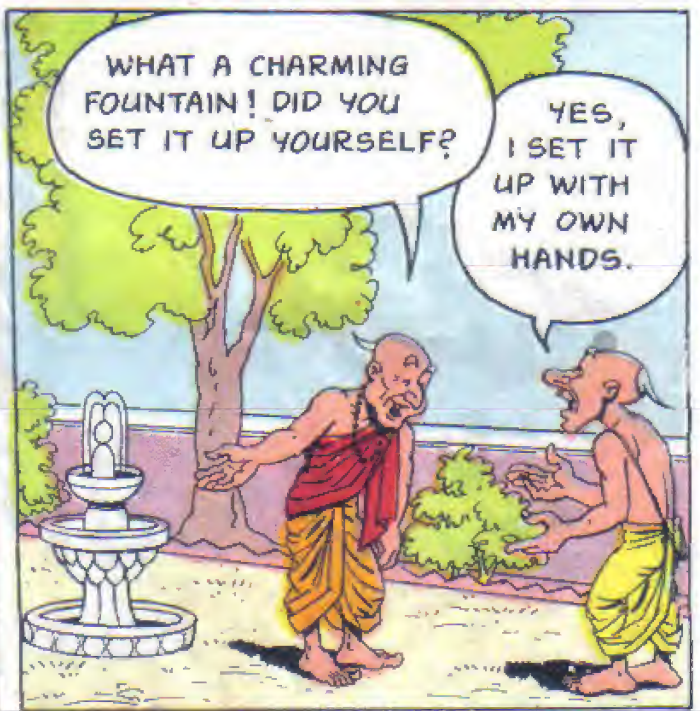
HOW TALL THESE FRUIT TREES HAVE GROWN! DID YOU PLANT THEM YOURSELF?

YES, SIR. FROM SEED TO FRUIT, IT WAS ALL MY WORK.



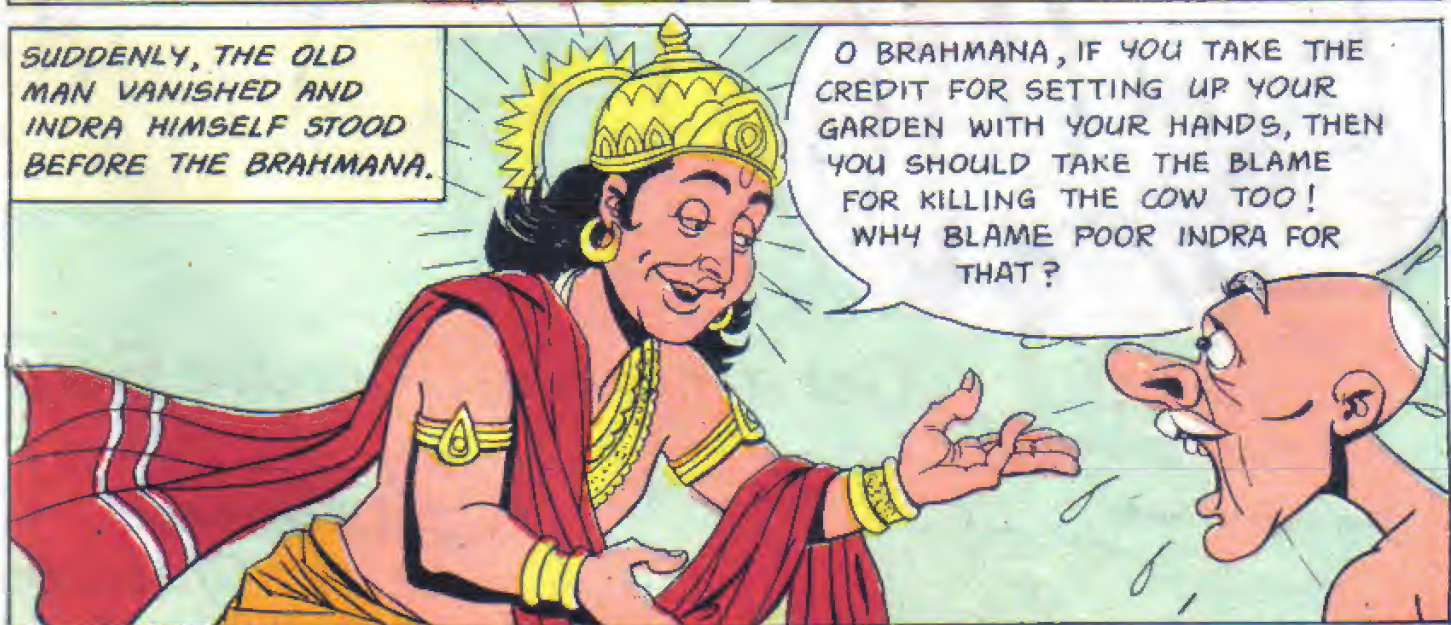
WHAT A CHARMING FOUNTAIN! DID YOU SET IT UP YOURSELF?

YES, I SET IT UP WITH MY OWN HANDS.



SUDDENLY, THE OLD MAN VANISHED AND INDRA HIMSELF STOOD BEFORE THE BRAHMANA.

O BRAHMANA, IF YOU TAKE THE CREDIT FOR SETTING UP YOUR GARDEN WITH YOUR HANDS, THEN YOU SHOULD TAKE THE BLAME FOR KILLING THE COW TOO! WHY BLAME POOR INDRA FOR THAT?





AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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Acquaint your
children with their
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